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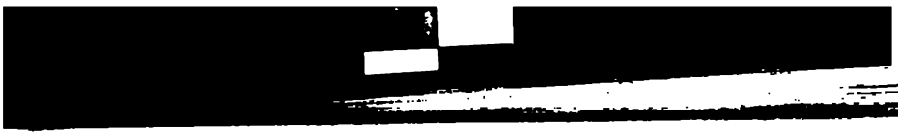

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AT PLATTSBURG

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AT PLATTSBURG

BY

ALLEN FRENCH

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1917

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Published April, 1917

TO

SQUAD EIGHT

IT MAY SURPRISE YOU, BOYS, TO SEE THAT IN MY BOOK THE SQUAD ISN'T AS IT REALLY WAS. SOME OF YOU ARE NOT THERE, AND THE REST ARE ALTERED. BUT WHILE, ON ACCOUNT OF THE STORY THAT I NEEDED AND THE FACTS I WANTED TO DISPLAY, I COULD NOT DRAW YOUR PORTRAITS, I HOPE I HAVE SUCCEEDED IN SHOWING THAT THING IN PLATTSBURG WHICH MEANT MOST TO ME PERSONALLY, THE SPIRIT OF OUR SQUAD

PREFACE

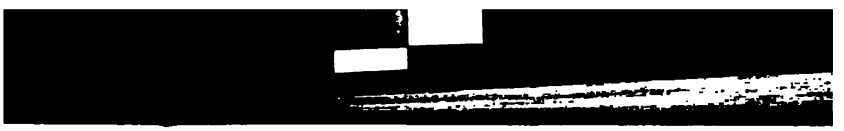
To describe military scenes is always to rouse the keenest scrutiny from military men. I write this foreword not to deprecate criticism, but to remind the professional reader that, while the scenes I have described are all from experience, the aim in writing them was not for technical exactness, often confusing to the lay reader, but rather for the purpose of giving a general picture of the fun and work at a training camp.

Nowadays we are making history so fast that readers may have to be reminded that last summer occurred the mobilization on the Mexican border of most of the regular army and many regiments of the National Guard, a fact which considerably affected conditions at Plattsburg.

The "Buzzard Song," which my company used with such satisfaction on the hike, was written by a camp-mate, John A. Straley, who has kindly allowed me to use it, with a few minor changes.

ALLEN FRENCH.

Concord, Massachusetts,
April 3, 1917.



AT PLATTSBURG

Richard Godwin to His Mother

On the train, nearing Plattsburg.
Friday morning, Sep. 8, 1916.

Dear Mother:—

Though you kissed me good-by with affection, you know there was amusement in the little smile with which you watched me go. I, a modest citizen, accustomed to shrink from publicity, was exposed in broad day in a badly fitting uniform, in color inconspicuous, to be sure, but in pattern evidently military and aggressive. What a guy I felt myself, and how every smile or laugh upon the street seemed to mean Me! The way to the railroad station had never seemed so long, nor so thronged with curious folk. I felt myself very silly.

Thus it was a relief when I met our good pastor, for I knew at the first glance of his eye that my errand and my uniform meant to him, as they did to me, something important. So strong was this comforting sense that I even forgot what importance he might attach to them.

But fixing me with his eye as I stopped and greeted him (being within easy hurrying dis-

tance of the station) he said in pained surprise: "And so you are going to Plattsburg?"

Then I remembered that he was an irreconcilable pacifist. Needing no answer, he went on: "I am sorry to see that the militarist spirit has seized you too."

Now if anything vexes me, it is to be told that I am a militarist. "Not that, sir," said I. "War is the last thing that I want."

"Train a man to wield a weapon," he rejoined, "and he will itch to use it." I think we were both a little sententious because of the approach of the train. "Your argument is, I suppose, that the country is in danger?"

"Exactly," I replied.

He raised both hands. "Madness! No one will attack us."

I refrained from telling him that with so much at stake I was unwilling to accept even treaty assurances on that point. He went on. "The whole world is mad with desire to slay. But I would rather have my son killed than killing others."

He is proud of his son, but he is prouder of his daughter. Said I, "If war comes, and we are unprepared for it, you might have not only your son killed, but your daughter too."

Horrified, he had not yet begun to express himself on the impossibility of invasion, when the train came. So we parted. To tell the truth, I am not sorry that he feels so: it is very ideal.

And I regret no longer having my own fine feeling of security. It is only a year or so ago that I was just such a pacifist as he.

If I in my new uniform was at home a curiosity, when I reached Boston I found myself merely one among many, for the North Station was full of Plattsburgers. There is great comfort in being like other folk. A thick crowd it was at our special train, raw recruits with their admiring women-folk or fun-poking friends. The departure was not like the leaving of soldiers for the front, such as we saw in July when the boys went to Texas. We should come back not with wounds, but with a healthy tan and much useful experience. So every one was jolly, except for a young couple that were walking up and down in silent communion, and sometimes furtively touching hands—a young married pair, I thought, before their first separation.

We were off without much delay, a trainload wholly of men, and all greenhorns. For all of us had nice fresh crinkly blouses, and olive-drab (properly o. d.) knees not yet worn white (as I have seen on returning Plattsburgers) while our canvas leggings were still unshaped to our manly calves. Our hats were new and stiff, and their gaudy cords were bright. And we were inquisitive of the life that was ahead of us, readily making acquaintance in order to compare our scraps of information. Dismay ran here and there with the knowledge that the typhoid in-

oculation required three weekly doses. Thank goodness, that is over with for me. We tried to be very soldierly in bearing, evidently an effort in other cases than mine. One fellow had his own gun along; he wanted, he said, to make a good score on the range. So I had my first chance to handle an army rifle.

You know that when I left, you had been worrying as to how I should stand the strain of the coming month's work. I will admit that I have been wondering about it myself. I have worked very hard for the last few years, practically without vacation, in order to marry as suited Vera's ideas. And then, two years after she had said Yes, and when my earnings ought to satisfy any woman, began the complex strain of the breaking of the engagement—the heart burnings, the self-searching, the difficult coming to an understanding. And now that she and I have parted friends, with both of us quite satisfied, I have been realizing how much run down I am, so that it has seemed quite possible that Plattsburg life might be too strenuous for me. But a good look at my companions has made it clear that I can stand up with the average of them. A fair number of them, to be sure, are brown and seasoned by the summer. But quite as many are pale and stooped from desk work, or pasty from good living. If I fall out, I shall have plenty of company.

I write this letter while the train is approaching Plattsburg. When I woke this morning we were

at a standstill in some railway yard, and beside us was standing another train, labelled like ours, doubtless carrying the New York men. It drew out ahead of us, and I suppose its inmates are now debarked, and gawking about them as presently my companions and I shall gawk. To-night I shall write again. Affectionately

DICK.

DAVID RIDGWAY FARNHAM, 3D, TO HIS MOTHER

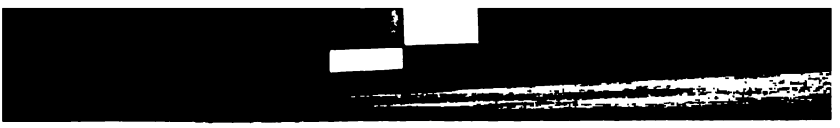
On the Train to Plattsburg.
Friday morning, Sept. 8th.

DEAR MAMA:—

It is unlucky that both of our cars were out of order just when I was starting for Plattsburg. For the train has been very hot and stufy, and so crowded. I tried once more to get myself a statroom, but when the agent said I should have to be with three other men, then I just gave up, and got the porter to make up my upper birth early, and climbed into it though I wasn't sleepy at all. But it was something to get by myself and be a little privat.

I spoke to a few of the fellows, but I couldn't make much out of them. One had never been to college, and another knew nothing of automobiles, and another began talking about the drill regulations, but you know I never even bought the book. The whole train was one big smoking car, and some fellows near me were very noisy over a game of poker.

I suppose I shall mannage to get along with these fellows, because I know I must if I want what father promised me, and if the fellows at the Casino aren't to laugh at me. But so far as I can see, everyone on the train isn't at all my kind. Father doesn't understand how I feel about fellows who are not in our set. I don't



look down on them, you know, for I'm sure most of them are very nice fellows of their sort. But I never knew anyone of their kind before, and what am I to talk to them about? Its all very well for father to say that I can get something worth while from every man I meet; but he's a business man, and so he's used to them.

You mustn't think I'm unhappy if I say I shall miss you and shall hate to be confined by the camp regulations. I'm not going to back out for father and cousin Walt have put it up to me to see the thing through and though I'm kind of used to disapointing father I don't intend that Walt shall think I'm sandless.

But when the camp breaks up you must be sure to be here, with the Rolls-Royce, to take me home. I don't think I could stand another trip like this. Love from,

DAVID.

Private Richard Godwin to His Mother

Plattsburg Camp.
Friday evening, Sept. 8.

Dear Mother:—

I had scarcely finished my letter of this morning when the train began to slow down, and then drew up alongside a wide and gently sloping field, while on the other side was the lake. With our luggage we poured out into the field, evidently our training ground, since beyond it were tented streets, with some big open-sided buildings that doubtless had some military use, since we saw rookies going in and out. In haste to get our share of what was to be had, we consulted the printed slips handed to us in the train.

"On arriving at camp: First, Carry your hand baggage to the Y. M. C. A."

Where was the Y. M. C. A.? There was no building standing near of even so much as two stories. There were tents and there were shacks, but even when we came to a street busy with electrics, automobiles, motor trucks, and foot passers, nothing of any size was to be seen. But as I followed along with the rest, noting that almost everybody we met, from the riders in the autos to the drivers of the trucks, was military, I saw a skeleton structure, tar-paper-roofed, and bearing the magic letters for which we were

looking. There regulars—artillerymen with red-corded hats—received our bags through the open frontage and stored them alphabetically.

"Second. Go to the mess-shacks for breakfast."

We went. We breakfasted. The mess shacks were those other open-sided buildings on the drill-field which I had already seen; their construction, being merely tarred roofs on posts and walled with mosquito netting, promised no elegance of fare. Nor was the fare elegant: milk, coffee, cereal, hard boiled eggs, bread, butter, a bruised apple. The milk was of two kinds, real and canned. Used in the coffee, or with sugar on the cereal, the canned milk was good enough as poured from a hole punched in the container; but a wise man near me prophesied that I should not like to drink it when diluted. Flat, he said. Tasted like chalk. Doubtless it was chemically correct, but (you see how scientific he was) the metabolism of the body despises chemical synthesis, and for real nourishment the palate must be satisfied.

"Third. At once after breakfast go to the Adjutant's Office and enroll."

So we stood in line, and when on nearing the window of the office I heard the Adjutant say to a predecessor, "Where's your thirty dollars?" I got out my greenbacks and presently paid them in, twenty-five for our maintenance at camp, five to be returned if during our stay we had not damaged any of Uncle Sam's property. And

since the adjutant assigned me to a company, I began to feel that I was getting somewhere.

"Fourth. Exchange your baggage checks for camp claim checks."

None of that for me. I had known enough to bring but a large suit-case, leaving behind everything that I could persuade myself was unnecessary. There was a memorandum on the printed slip to the effect that trunks and other large pieces of baggage would be stored at the post barracks, where owners could visit them on Sunday mornings. A sad weekly ceremony for one who had to choose from an excess of luxuries!

"Fifth. Report to the officer commanding your Company."

I did not find him. Though again I stood in line, this time with men with whom I was to associate, those to whom I reported in the Orderly Tent at the head of H company street were but sergeants and volunteers like myself, though men of more experience, as I could tell by their weathered uniforms and faded hat-cords. They filled out a card concerning me, led me to the tent pole, and measuring my height with a crude but effective instrument, announced "Tent Eight."

"Sixth. Bring your hand baggage to your tent."

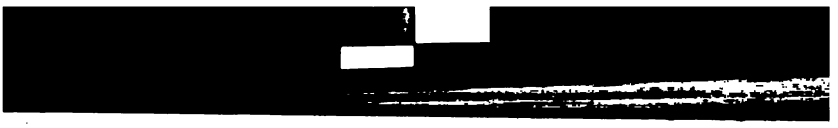
So I brought it from the Y. M. C. A. Now the topography of the camp is thus. Just within the enclosure, and parallel with the street outside, runs the officers' street, their tents along one

side of it, each with its little sign bearing the occupant's name. From the other side, toward the drill ground and the lake, lead away the company streets with double rows of khaki tents facing each other. All were on a thin and barren soil, where between the tents some few weeds straggled, while everywhere else men's feet had killed all growth. No! For in front of one of the tents, under the protection of its ropes, grew a half-dozen thrifty pansy plants, all in bright bloom. But elsewhere all was brown sand that looked as if it might blow dust in clouds, but which also, I was glad to see, looked as if it might absorb all ordinary rains. The street, about midway of its length, rose a little, then dropped, and straddling this ridge I found Tent 8, in the best possible position should the weather turn wet. As I entered, stooping, I peered about the shadowed interior.

The dry floor was ploughed into holes and ridges by the feet of the last occupants. One man, bearded and grizzled, was sitting on a cot in one corner, exploring the interior of a big blue canvas bag; a professor or doctor person, who gave me one keen glance, briefly said "Good day," and went on with his occupation. A second bed, already neatly set up and equipped, stood in another corner. Its owner, lithe and keen, a fellow of about twenty-five, was watching a third, man-sized but boy-faced, who was struggling with a cot in its chrysalis stage, being apparently

quite unable to unfold it. I knew the lad at a glance, young David Ridgway Farnham 3d, whose cousin Walter was in my class, to whom I was best man, as you remember, some five years ago. Now young David has been the laughing stock of the family, spoiled with riches and an indulgent mamma. Walter told me that many tutors, on princely salaries, just managed to get him through Harvard this year. And here he was at Plattsburg! However, he couldn't know me, so I disposed my things in a corner.

The lithe and keen person seemed lither and keener at second glance. He was of a splendid blond type, with flashing blue eyes; everything about him was perfectly straight, his backbone, his nose, his close-cropped fair hair, the thin-lipped mouth, the drop of his chin, and even the precipitous fall of his high cheek-bones. He had not noticed me at all, so intent was he on the struggles of young Farnham. A very efficient person he seemed, and immediately proved it. For Farnham, with that appealing helplessness which I remember in him as a charming child (you know that with his brown eyes, curly hair, and rosy skin he's as handsome as a girl) looked up at his watcher. He immediately said: "Bend the leg the other way. Now the next one. Now spread the whole thing out. Now spring those two cross-pieces into place." But even then, though the cot had gained a recognizable shape, Farnham was still baffled. His hands were soft,



and so were his muscles. "This way," said the other after a moment. And sitting on the cot, with his feet he forced the cross-bar at one end into position, then swung about and put the other one into place, and the thing was done.

"Thanks," said young David, politely but not warmly, in a way that showed how used he is to being waited on. "Have a cigarette? I suppose we shall—er—room together. My name is Farnham."

"Mine is Knudsen," said the other. And then I appreciated the cause of his blondness.

"I'm from Harvard, class of 'sixteen," said young David. Well-grown as he is, I couldn't help thinking of him as young.

"I'm from Buffalo," said Knudsen shortly. "I run a foundry there." His blue eyes were unwavering and quite expressionless as he looked Farnham over.

"Farnham? Farnham?" said the man with the short pointed beard. The others turned and looked at him. "I remember now. You were in my section in English A, your Freshman year."

"Oh," said young David. "Professor Corder. Of course. How de do? I remember that you flunked me."

"But you got through English D after two tries," said Corder. "Such is college life."

As none followed up the subject, I asked where they got their equipment. On their direction I went to the store-tent at the head of the street,

where on the strength of my signature an obliging regular intrusted to me various listed articles, which I lugged to the tent.

This domicile is in the shape of a pyramid on a three foot wall, about sixteen feet on a side, the whole supported by a solid post held by an iron tripod. The tent contains eight beds, the corporal's always to the right of the entrance, the others in a mystic order which I will not bother you with. As yet we did not know how we were to fall in, but I set up my cot modestly among the rear rank, put under it my suit case, laid on the cot a mattress and pillow, properly cased in light duck, and garnished the whole with three blue blankets which promise comfort in this September weather. And then I dove into the blue bag.

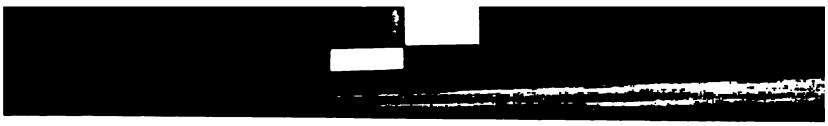
First on the list, a sweater. O. d., like all the outfit, and very heavy.

A poncho. A rubber oblong with button-holes along three sides, and a slit, provided with a collar, less than halfway down the middle.

A shelter-half. That was the strangely shaped piece of brown duck, in pattern something like a big old-fashioned kite, with unsymmetrical button-holes and loops of rope.

Five tent-pins. Aluminum, ridged and bent.

A pack. A queerly outlined piece of canvas, provided with straps of webbing, wider or narrower, with buckles, rings, and a big pocket. Its attachments numerous and incomprehensible.



A cartridge belt. Easily recognized, with its many pockets and numberless eyelets.

A first-aid kit. In a sealed tin box, buttoned in a pocket attached to the belt.

A canteen in a cloth case. Not flat and circular, but solid and bulky.

A bacon tin. Hm—a small box?

A condiment can. A double ended contraption, in one end of which had once been powdered chocolate.

A meat can. An oval saucepan, with a lid over which the hinged handle shuts down.

A knife, fork, and spoon.

I stuffed them away again, shed my blouse, as I saw the others were doing, and was therefore ready when, our squad having filled up, the call came for us to fall in. Out into the street we tumbled, each of the dozen and a half tents furnishing a squad, the squads falling in according to number. The sergeants formed us, got us into column of squads, and marched us away down the public street, where military persons of all kinds went by, from lone privates to officers driving automobiles, and where the only notice taken of us was by civilians in motor-parties, who came to see our zoo.

So here I was, for the first time in my life marching in the ranks, like any private not knowing where or why. For a quarter, a half, three quarters of a mile we went at a quick pace on the macadam, till my soft tissues knew what was

meant by the "hammer, hammer, hammer on the hard highway." And my misery had plenty of company. The man in front of me, a bulky person, was wringing wet, and I saw another fellow with the sweat actually dripping off his chin. It was a welcome relief to turn in at a big gate, pass between brick buildings, and come onto a great grass field across which we marched directly toward a building with a long portico, on which the sight of rookies waiting promised us rest. Very willingly we broke ranks at command. We learned from our predecessors that we were there for physical examination.

When our turn came at last it was all very brisk and business-like, and soon I was passed as being sound in body and feet. With most of us the ordeal was equally successful; but one poor chap sat melancholy in a blanket, waiting for a second test. Then I straggled back to camp with Professor Corder, who confessed himself just under the age-limit of forty-five. In spite of his successful examination he acknowledged a little anxiety as to whether he could stand the work; has coddled himself, he acknowledges, for years; worries about the effect of woollen stockings. I imagine that most men of his age here have some such anxiety.

When enough of us had dribbled back to camp we were again assembled, and were taken down to the drill-field by the sergeant. And there for the first time in my life I saw a West Pointer at

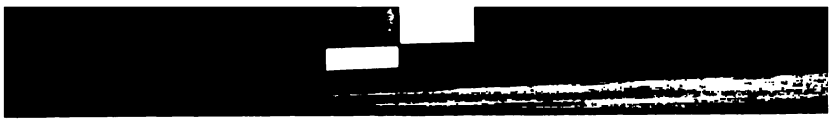
his work. He appeared from somewhere, and the sergeant handed us over to him. A tall and lithe fellow he is, so graceful that not even his military carriage can disguise it. He has an olive-dark skin, hair that curls at the temples, black eyes, nose straight and thin, and lips curving like a woman's. Give him the drooping mustache of older days, and what a romantic figure he would make! I knew him at once for a Southerner, from his coloring, his physical beauty, and a slight trace of languor, real or affected.

But he knew his business. There is an uncertainty about the sergeants, as thinking "Am I doing this right?" But though he looked at us out of eyes that were a little sleepy his tenor was clear as a silver bugle, and (if you can excuse the mixture of similes) it snapped like a whip. No hesitation, nor even any thought as to what he should do next. We straightened at the first command he flung at us, and in three minutes we were working to please him. The position of a soldier! Was there the slightest spark of amusement in his eyes as he described it to us, as if to say "You mob of clerks and manufacturers and professional men can't really take this position"? I never "lifted and arched" my chest so thoroughly. Did he intimate as he gave his other commands, "You men may play at doing this, but really it takes a soldier to succeed"? If this was his meaning, certainly it put us on our mettle. What he gave us were the facings and the

steps and marchings, the simple movements by fours, guiding and dressing. When we blundered, there was his little concealed smile to make us swear to do the thing right next time. As we marched he kept pace with us, and then all his languor was gone. His step was springy, his arms swung, his eye roved up and down the line, and he snapped out his "One, two, three, four!" each like a little pistol shot. Remarked Corder, beside me, "His time is absolutely perfect—do you notice?" I had noticed. The sergeants tried to imitate his counting, but compared to him they were hoarse and spiritless.

And he was only our lieutenant! The first sergeant called him such, in answering a question; and then I noticed the single bar on his collar. What would the captain be like?

The bugle blew Recall, and it was very welcome. We were marched back to the company street and dismissed. My rear rank man was one Pickle, a hardware clerk from a town in central Pennsylvania, who never in his life saw a big league baseball game, and yet can tell you the names and records of all the chief players, especially of the Brooklyns, for which club he is a rooter. He said of the lieutenant: "One of those wiry wonders, Tireless Thomas of the Training-field. Doesn't he never remember that we are flesh and blood? Me for my little cot!" Following his example, more than half of the squad lay down till roused by the news that our rifles were being served out. So we flocked out in haste to



get what would give us lamed shoulders and tired arms. Being thus roused, I next went for a swim in the lake, which was stony and cold and altogether invigorating.

The lieutenant had us out again in the afternoon, us and the guns. Consequently we were put through the manual of arms until the anticipated lameness is now a reality, not only of the arms but of the whole body. I find it is not enough to shift your rifle according to prescribed motions; it must be snappy, and in cadence. "Like a clock-work," muttered Pickle in despair. And it is a crime to drop a rifle. Its first commission roused our lieutenant from his languor. "Who dropped that piece?" he thundered. Then he outpoured contempt. "There'll be glue on little Willie's fingers next time, sure," whispered Pickle.

Tired at the end of the day, I yet feel virtuous, having devoted to my country a pound of my flesh. I write by lantern light in the tent, there having been no conference tonight on account of rain. Most of the squad are away, exploring the city; but Corder is already abed and sleeping—"as insurance," he said to me, explaining his middle-aged caution. I shall follow him soon. Good-night from

DICK.

Postscript, written Saturday morning at 5.30, waiting for breakfast.

We have in our squad one Randall, a person of recent Yale extraction—though (having good

Yale friends) I don't lay it up against the college. Yesterday he established his bed in the corporal's place, which so far the rest of us had modestly avoided; and he fell foul of young David ten minutes after he had come among us. The two are evidently the youngest of us, with "college" sticking out all over them, and so might naturally draw together. But there is a still more natural antagonism between them, of the thoroughbred for the mongrel. For young Farnham, in spite of his effeminacy, has the instincts of his ancestors; and Randall, in spite of a magnificent physique, carries round with him something that says to David, "Don't trust him!" What makes personality? I declare I cannot put my finger on the thing that makes me sure that Randall is yellow; but David has seen it, and has drawn back from it. Ninety-nine Yale men may slang Harvard, and the Harvard man will take it in good part—and *vice versa;* but Randall is the hundredth, and he said a few things that made David tremble, not with anger but with disgust. "Have a cigarette?" asked Randall at the end. "No, thanks," answered David.—"Oh, he doesn't smoke!" cried the other. "I do," said David, and lit his own cigarette. I'm sorry for it. Probably Randall can make David pay for this declaration of war. Yet I'm glad too. And you should have seen Knudsen's eye flash, and then soften as he looked at the young fellow.

War has been continuing these last few minutes.

In the most ridiculous way David, after his shower bath, messed round with a shaving brush and a piece of soap, trying to get a lather on his face. Randall saw it first, and with roars of laughter called our attention to him. Corder, who instantly understood, quietly twinkled; but Knudsen wrinkled his brow at the boy. "Have you never done that before?" he demanded. Said innocent David, "I forgot to get my man to show me." "Your *man?*" asked Knudsen. "His valet!" screamed Randall, overcome with the humor of the situation. Knudsen, never having been acquainted with the Harvard Gold Coast, showed in his keenly intelligent face first amazement, then disgust, then to my pleasure a kind of pity. In a moment he had both brush and soap in his hands, and soon plentifully lathered David. The boy then took his razor, one of the old style, and immediately gashed himself.

With indulgent impatience Knudsen took the razor, sat the boy down, and muttering to himself that he'd never tried this job before, skilfully shaved one half of David's face, at each moment explaining the use of the weapon. "Why didn't you get a safety razor?" he demanded. The lad answered, "My cousin Walter uses this kind." I remember that he used to idolize Walt, as all the younger fellows did; if he still has some of the feeling there's hope for him. Knudsen made him shave the other half of his face himself—a botched job, but still David finished it. Randall remarked

that safety razors were best for girls, and when David finally emerged fresh, pink, and handsome in spite of his wounds, Randall said, "Now you're yourself again, Miss Lucy."

The boy's face is very sensitive; I saw that he was more hurt than angry, and he flushed deeply with the pain of it. It was Knudsen who was angry, but he said nothing. Corder still watched quizzically. I know that the title will stick. It is not ten minutes since the word was uttered, and we are already taking it up as David's name. Randall uses it flagrantly, the rest of us as a matter of course, all except Knudsen. "Come on, Lucy," he said just now when the first call for assembly sounded, and with his hand on David's shoulder he went with him into the street, protectively, I think.

I shall close this and send it off. Again love from

DICK.

Private Richard Godwin to His Mother

Saturday, Sep. 9, 1916.
At the Y. M. C. A. Nearing 9 P. M.

Dear Mother:—

My tremendous postscript of this morning has somewhat led me out of the order of the day. I found myself awake at reveille, and rolled willingly out of bed. At the spigot, the one and only article of convenience at the lower end of the company street, I found a helpful comrade who gladly soused me from a bucket, and the day was begun. Back in the tent I found the fellows slowly coming to consciousness, all except that accurate and careful elder, Corder, who was dressing with great preciseness after a shower bath, and was calmly pleased at having no particular symptoms of old age to report. He and I have a valuable distinction as the only men in the squad with foresight enough to have been *typhinated*, worth while on this day when the others must submit to inoculation, if they want to run no risk on the hike. Then David's shaving, as described. It was cold when we finally turned out, and our humane lieutenant, placing himself on a table at the head of the street, while we in open formation faced him, put us through setting-up exercises that warmed us sufficiently to brave the chilly mess-shacks for our breakfast.

It was there that David found me out. He

first got my given name, Richard. Then he made me acknowledge that I was in Harvard, 1910. At the next pause he said, "My cousin Walter Farnham was in that class." "Yes," said I, and talked to the man on my other side. That stumped David, that anyone should know his cousin Walt and not be eager to talk about him. He did not approach the subject again till he and Knudsen and I and Corder were together in the tent. Then he put it right up to me. "Weren't you my cousin's best man?" "I was," said I, and Sick Call having just blown, I went out, saying that I wanted to see who answered it. I know Knudsen and Corder looked at me hard; as for David, he cried out, "Oh, I beg your pardon!" I have reasoned out that with his delicate social perceptions and the stock of gossip that his mother supplies him with, he must have concluded that I was not in the mood to talk of weddings; but the real fact is that I don't intend to be enlisted as his nurse. As for the other side of it, I know I can depend on him not to tell the others about Vera and me.

When I came back, it being about time for drill, I found him explaining that while of course he'd not had his "man" at college, he always used a barber there. The man, I'm sure, was with him at all other times. Then when we fell in I heard a fellow from another squad call David Lucy. That was Randall's doing. Presently it will be all up and down the street. But Randall will be

the only one to have any feeling about it. With the others now it is a matter of course, even with David himself.

Our morning's work began on the drill-field, with its open drainage trenches yawning for our feet and its scattered mounds to stumble on. Gay work, this learning to walk in the right place, stand in the right way, toss your nine pound rifle about as if it were a straw, and all with but a moment or two for thought between the first order and the second. Even Pickle was silent this morning, intent like the rest of us on his job. We are all so green that, except for the occasional old-timer, no one was giving his neighbor any advice.

Then on a sudden we were tested. "All who have had any previous experience" were required to step one pace to the front. There were not many of them. Then "all who wish to be corporal," or words to that effect. With about half the company I took the forward pace. The lieutenant separated these goats from the humbler sheep, sent us under a sergeant to another part of the field, and himself took charge of the remainder. The sergeant divided us up into twos and set us by turns to drilling each other, evidently to test our knowledge and our ability to give commands.

Pickle was my victim, or I was his. We eyed each other doubtfully. "You begin," said I. "No, you," retorted he. "Gee, what a gink I was to think I wanted to be corporal!" So I tackled

the job; and of course, not being used to it, I made long pauses between the commands, gave them wrong, could not assume a proper military accent. It's not so easy. I have heard, in the armory at Boston, a militia captain (*captain*, mind you!) give the command "Attention!" in three different ways, continually experimenting. So how could I, for the first time in my life, rap out my orders like a veteran? What we had to do was absurdly simple; but poor Pickle, when I balked, succeeded no better than I, so finally we fell to consulting each other about it and became idle, like other groups that we saw. Then came our way another pair, who being as experienced as we are green, speedily took us in charge and manhandled us almost as skilfully as the lieutenant. I presently saw our West Pointer observing the drilling groups, and with him another with two bars on his collar, the same erectness, and the same natural air of knowing his business. The two were like farmers judging cattle, disposing of each one with swiftness, taking rapid notes, and then herding us together into our original ranks for a final shaking down. The captain disappeared, but I hoped he was to be ours, for though I had had but sidewise glimpses of him, there seemed a fine frank openness about him that I liked.

Sure enough, in the afternoon he appeared in this wise. The company was assembled and marched out onto the highway, where we stood

in double rank with our hats off, for a final sizing up. I heard a new voice, deep and powerful, at the further end of the line; then along he came with the lieutenant, rapidly sizing us up, counting us off, thrusting in a new man here and there, the new men to be our corporals. Randall disappeared into another squad, and we have now as corporal one of those two who drilled Pickle and me this morning. There are these others of us: Pickle, Corder, Knudsen, Lucy, Clay, a handsome young Southern medical student, and Reardon, a grocer's clerk from a little town in Connecticut. Our corporal is Bannister, manager of the routing department, whatever that may be, of a tool-making establishment near Detroit. For a mixed crowd, of ages from grizzled Corder down to the very new graduate, what could be better? The captain, having put us all in place, called us to attention without any fuss, and stated that the new Number Four men were to be our squad leaders "until such time as other men proved themselves to be better.—So go to it," he added grimly. Then he marched us back to the street, where the tents were all freshly numbered with chalk, and dismissed us to put our beds in the proper order.

Since military regulations cover the positions of beds in the tent, almost every man had to shift his place. A genius discovered that this was a good time to begin with a level floor, the idea ran rapidly from squad to squad, and presently the

street was filled with piled cots and heaped baggage, while from each door came clouds of dust. Our floor levelled, taking care to preserve the pitch of the ridge that runs through it, we moved in again, even before the dust was settled. As I am Number One of our front rank, I bunk to the left of the door; peer around the opening, and you will see my feet. Our rifles and bayonets we keep in a gun rack that leans against the tripod of the tent-pole; and our surplus clothes we hang from a square frame that is suspended higher up. These two conveniences are squad property, being bought at a dollar each from a Jewish-looking gentleman who offered them for sale, their evident usefulness forcing the bargain. As they are most roughly built of light lumber, and have plainly served in each of the previous camps this year, there is good profit to the speculators who supplied them in the first place, and who gather them up when they are abandoned at the breaking up of each camp, only to sell them again. The tax on the squad is not great, but I wonder why the camp management allows outsiders such princely takings.

Feeling energetic, I began digging out the old ditch that surrounds our tent, to make it better able to carry off water in the next storm. Knudsen insisted on doing his share, then Corder took the spade from him for the next side. When Pickle, who was standing ready, said "*You* don't need to work," Corder asked plaintively, "Do

I seem as old as that?" So he was allowed to do his stint. Lucy placidly watched us.

Then, it being yet early afternoon, the typhoid candidates, more than half the company, were gathered up and taken away to be punctured. The small remainder of us were taken to the drill field and were delivered to the sergeants, apparently that they might show their mettle in the presence of the officers. Now you know that every calling has its tests of a man; in this soldier business the first lies in the ability to stand up and give your orders with such confidence in yourself that your men shall feel confidence in you. There were two of the sergeants that I noticed for their difference in this respect. The one was sunburned, tall, and lean; his brows jutted, his eyes under them were steady and sharp, his shoulders were square, and he had a very firm pair of bow-legs, which in some men is not displeasing. He knew his job; his voice rolled like the deep notes of an organ; we knew what he meant for us to do, and we did it. The other man was narrow and chicken-breasted, his long legs weak, his smile a smirk, his pronunciation so affected that we disgraced him because we blundered from pure lack of comprehension. Why is it that men's outsides so often correspond to their innards? And how did the latter of these two get his job? I suppose he has done some service to warrant his sergeant's stripes.

Corder and I went to the lake to swim. He

interests me by the careful study of his condition; is afraid that some sign of old age will develop to send him away, and is almost boyishly pleased to find himself able to do all the work. "And I hope," said he, "that I shall learn to stand straighter. One feels a certain pride when in uniform, and I try to fill mine out, if only to escape hearing some youngster say, 'Gee, get onto that hollow-chested professor chap as a rookie!' But it's hard to keep straight." The prime of life, he said to me again, isn't so very prime.

When we came back the street was full of invalids. Army serum must work quick, for half the arms of the inoculees were lame, and when I thoughtlessly touched Pickle on the shoulder he howled. "The guy that counted out my half billion bugs," said he, "must have thrown in an extra hundred thousand for good measure. And they're all working overtime." At Retreat there was some difficulty in coaxing arms into blouses, and a number of men asked to be excused from evening duties for the sole purpose of lying upon their couches and staring at the canvas.

The rest of us marched to our first conference, on the slope of the drill field below the furthest mess-shacks, where we were massed in a semicircle. It was an interesting sight, a thousand men in olive-drab slowly blending with their background as the dusk grew, yet with the faces of most of them showing up in the coming moonlight. Behind the speaker were the lake and the

mountains, with the moon just beginning to glimmer on the little waves. It was the General himself who addressed us, welcoming us, speaking briefly of the purpose of our coming, expressing confidence that we would work as hard as our predecessors: a fine man-to-man address. I could not help thinking of a German general that I once heard speak to *Einjaehriger*—stiff, short, and unapproachable. Wood was stimulating, and made us readier for our duties.

The moon was brighter when we got back to the company street, and someone had lighted a fire at its head. Here a hundred of us, including some of the invalids, packed together in a circle around our new captain, while he spoke to us briefly. I had a good view of him. Shorter than the lieutenant, yet still a tall man, very strongly made, he spoke, like the general, as man to man, and the least thing he appeared to expect was any difficulty with us. He told us that the work was hard and tiresome; he would make it as easy as possible, but he knew we were there to work, and we could depend on him (without a twinkle) to give us everything that was coming to us. His tent was right at the head of the street; he wanted us to come to him at any time for any question; it was his business (and again no twinkle) to make our minds as well as our bodies comfortable. Thus I get the impression that he is something of a humorist, yet also that his chief trait is aggressiveness. I cannot tell you why, for all was

spoken with a quiet voice, even with a certain gentleness that disguises what I am sure is the basic character of the man. Knudsen felt it too, for as we walked away from the conference he said: "The captain's a scrapper."

"He's a Southerner," said Clay with satisfaction. It had been plain in his accent.

This letter, begun Saturday night, I finish Sunday morning. Send me, please, a dozen clothes pins, to keep my washing on the tent-ropes. Pickle hung up his wet towel today, and had to chase it into the next company street. As everywhere is the same black sand, you can imagine its condition, likewise that of a moist cake of soap when you accidentally drop it—excellent for scouring, but not good for other cleaning purposes until its new covering is dissolved away. Send me also some paper napkins folded; the supply at the mess-shacks sometimes gives out.

A bit of character. Lucy was looking this morning rather helplessly at his silk pajamas, and wondering where he could get them washed, when there entered the tent a handsome and stalwart regular. "Washing?" he inquired respectfully. "Oh," asked Lucy hopefully, "are you an agent for some laundress?" "No," said the man, "I wash them myself. I guarantee to return everything tomorrow, properly done." The boy was not merely surprised, but almost shocked. "*You* do the work?" he asked. Then

his native kindness came to his aid, and he was about to bundle all his clothes into the fellow's hands, when Knudsen said, quietly but very pointedly, "When I'm here at camp I wash my own clothes." David flushed quite pink. "Then I think I'll do the same."

"It's good for him," said Knudsen to me afterward. "It's good for him to be called Lucy. It's good for him to learn to shave himself with that razor. I was going to tell him to buy himself a safety razor, but thought I'd better not."

I'm glad I left David to find his own nurse. Knudsen manages him with certainty. On the other hand the boy likes him immensely, even though the taciturn Swede does but a small share of the talking when they are together. He is a foundryman, had a hard struggle to establish his growing business, and has in consequence a fierce outlook on the world, as one who at any time may have to fight for his own. David, by persistent but most tactful questioning, has brought out two salient facts in his biography. Knudsen is first the son of an immigrant, talks Swedish in his home, has none of the American background which to David is a man's birthright. And second he is a college man, from Hobart. Over these two facts the boy is sadly perplexed. Legally, Knudsen is as American as the rest of us —but can he be? Socially he is also all right, since he is a college man—but after all can you

call Hobart a college? Don't blame David. It's not his fault if he's narrow-minded.

I shall close and mail this letter now, and at the first convenient opportunity shall begin the next. I foresee that my letters to you will be practically a continuous performance. Love from

DICK.

From Private Samuel Pickle to His Brother

Plattsburg Training Camp.
Sunday, Sept. 10, 1916.

Say, Tony, what a mutt I was not to get myself jabbed for typhoid before I came here! It would have been worth the money. Today my arm feels like a hornet's nest, with roots up into my shoulder and down my ribs. And my head is light and wavy—that's fever. I saw one guy keel over stiff when the doctor stuck him, and the poor corp of our squad says he'd swap jobs with his rear-rank man if he could only feel like a boy again.

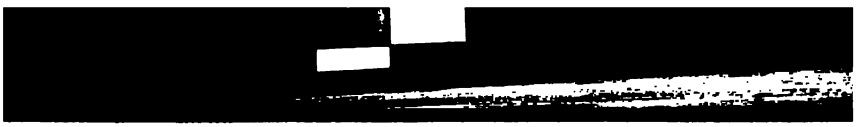
They feed you here with food that's like ourselves, coarse and plentiful. I'll never again call sister's doughnuts sinkers; wish I could see any kind of a doughnut. The table china is delicate French—nit. The waiters are in livery. The man with a long reach will grow fat while others starve. Take care not to spill anything; it may fall into your hat that hangs under the table. Iced tea should be iced and should be tea; milk should be milk. When you see a thing that you want, ask for it; the platter will get to you even if the food don't. Elbows on the table are comfort but bad form, same as at home. The men that stay longest at table take pains to tell you that they eat slow. Eat first whatever is handiest

when you sit down; why be idle while your soup is coming?

It's considered impolite to drink at the company spigot, but there's no rule against cleaning your teeth there. The best way to rinse your stocking after soaping is to hold it over the nozzle like a bag, and squeeze it while the water runs through. It takes so long to get hot water here that you'd better learn to shave with cold. I never before made my toilet out on the sidewalk, but a fellow can get used to anything.

You may talk of being chambermaid to a cow, but it's worse being groom to a gun. These rifles have been in use all summer, and they're all et up inside. They're like fat men, they sweat. Then they rust. Put in some dope and swab the barrel, then take twenty-five dinky little squares of cotton flannel and run them through, and the last will be just as dirty as the first. Let it go at that, and put in some oil, and say Damn.

It takes three lacings below the knee to get yourself dressed, and three unlacings to get to bed, unless you want to be a real soldier boy, and sleep in your clothes. And only two hooks in all these lacings—the rest eyelets, eyelets. The cartridge belt has ten pockets; I found a clip of blanks in mine, and am keeping it to celebrate with. The proper way to draw your bayonet is not to cut your ear off. They tell me it's been done. The outfitter lied to me. He sold me a tight blouse because we wore our sweaters over



them, and here it's against the rule and my sweater will never go under the blouse and I'll freeze to death. Never believe anybody that says he knows.

When the horn blows pay no attention. It's the top sergeant's whistle you've got to jump for. If you want to know what to wear don't ask him; the lieutenant will change the order and the captain will change it again. Ask the major, unless the general happens by. Always salute unless you happen to be smoking; if you have a pipe in your mouth, don't see him. Fall River!

SAM.

Private Richard Godwin to His Mother

Sunday evening, Sep. 10th, 1916.

Dear Mother:—

I had no sooner closed this morning's addenda than I had to prepare for the bugaboo of tent inspection. A good bugaboo, of course, as at home it always pays to have visitors, we redd up the house so carefully. Our job this morning was not only to have the tent perfectly neat, but also to have our kits laid out on our beds according to regulations. One blanket was spread over the cot, the others were folded at the head, and on them the sweater and pillow. At the foot were folded the poncho and shelter half; then all the equipment was spread out. Under the head of the bed was the blue barrack-bag and the suit-case; under the foot the shoes. Then we stood in line in front of the tent, and watched while the lieutenant, coming from tent to tent, left each squad in a state of despair behind him. To cheer us, someone at the sergeants' tent started a victrola, but a snap from the lieutenant ended that diversion. Result of it all: we were told to inspect a certain bed in Tent One, fold our blankets and ponchos *right*, and lay out our equipment according to a sacredly prescribed order. A meek procession filed in and out of the tent for the next half hour.

It appears that blankets must be folded in a certain manner and laid in a certain way, so that the inspector can see at a glance whether the proper number of them is present—that none are in hock, I suppose. The manner of folding ingeniously insures that on making the bed at night the blankets must first be entirely shaken out; ditto in the morning. Some sanitary martinet evolved that scheme. We are told that a fourth blanket will be served out to us. Folded double lengthwise, four will allow seven thicknesses over us and one below, or any other proportion, according to the temperature. Sleeping as I do with the tent wall looped up, I shall be glad of the seven thicknesses.

Cleanliness being next to godliness, many of the men washed clothes instead of going to church. A little daily washing in this fair weather keeps a wardrobe always ready for service. It's simple if you combine your laundry work with your swim.

Bannister, our corporal, got us out on the drill field this afternoon for squad practice. But as even he is new to many of our evolutions, instead of monarchy we found democracy, so many of us had something to say. Part of the time Knudsen gently but firmly managed the squad; we taught each other how to stack arms; and finally from one argument we could only be rescued by appeal to the drill regulations. We knelt around the little blue book, while the opponents of two ap-

parently conflicting ideas eagerly debated, until of a sudden each saw the other's point, and discovered that they meant the same thing.

Coming back, we found ourselves heading obliquely toward the company street, with a half turn to make in order to enter it properly. Corder suggested that the command should be "Left half turn," but Reardon contended for "Half left," and at the proper moment the corporal gave that order. Naturally there ensued at the tent another debate, everyone putting in his oar, until by the book the Old One proved that while for a company in column the command should have been "Column half left," for a squad "Left half turn" was correct. A mixing business, this learning how to fight for one's country.

Said I to Corder, "You'll take Bannister's job away from him if he doesn't look out." He laughed. "No," said he. "I like to admire the scenery rather than attend to business, and I'm a dreamer anyway. But watch Knudsen. He's a soldier type, and unless I'm mistaken he's had some training, though he doesn't claim it."

Word has gone forth that we are to go through the drill regulations at the rate of some forty paragraphs a day. So there is much study up and down the street, and that not merely on the part of would-be corporals.

This letter is finished under difficulties, for the lantern goes out every few minutes, as four of us cluster around it with our pens and paper.

A puff, a pop, a flicker or two, and it's out. Then laughter, curses, two or three failures to light the wick, and we're off again for another short spell. Clay promises that we shall have no trouble with the lantern after tonight. Some squads have clubbed together to buy acetylene lanterns, which illuminate the tents most brilliantly; but the cost is seven dollars, and though our squad has mentioned the luxury, it is evident that most of the men wish to avoid the extra expense. Though of course I could buy the thing as a present to the squad, I think it would rather mar our present feeling of equality. Moreover, there was a trifle of an explosion in Tent 13 early this evening, after which the new lantern was thrown away as junk. If I should come again, I should bring some compact lighting contraption. Meanwhile the little flashlight is good for searching in one's suit case, and there is always a table and electric light at the company tent, close by the captain's.

Good-by, with love from

DICK.

Private Godwin's Daily Letter

Monday, Sept. 11, 1916.

Dear Mother:—

I began my day with my usual bucket from the tap; there are always early birds to serve me, and my helper this morning said it made him feel virtuous just to souse me. I prefer this to the shower baths, which are much further away. A very few go early to the lake and make parade of it; said one to his corporal yesterday, finding him crawling from his bed into his clothes, "My God, man, don't you ever bathe?" But the poor corporal was still shaking with his typhoid.

Clay, who was up early on mysterious errands in the dusk, has just brought in boards to lay in front of his cot. Reardon asked, "What are you going to do on the hike? You'll have to put your feet on the ground." But Clay evidently likes a bit of luxury, and when he gave me his surplus boards I found I liked it too, for I prefer keeping my feet out of this sand, which has a creeping quality and gets everywhere. Out in front of the tent there had appeared a bench. "Hi!" cried Bannister, "where did that come from?" Clay said nothing, and Bannister, who appreciated the new convenience, thought it best to ask no more. I, with a mind on further conveniences, suggested that we club together for a bucket for our washing. Clay offered to get this

without cost, but late in the afternoon reported failure. "I couldn't get one, though I looked in every tent in the other companies." Then he missed our new bench. "Where has it gone?" he demanded. Corder answered dryly, "Back to its original owners, I suppose." But the lantern works better tonight, as the fellows all remark, avoiding mention of the fact that it has a somewhat different shape.

This morning we had our first drill in calisthenics. We were spaced in very open order, advised to take off our shirts, and Captain Wheeler, a magnificent figure of a man, strong as an oak in spite of his gray hair, stood on a platform and put us through exercises that searched out, so the boys agreed, muscles that you didn't know you had. You get a new idea of the "position of a soldier" after he has shown it to you. "Oh, no, no, no!" he cried when first we came to attention at his command, his voice rolling away over the lake into infinite distance. And then he made us try to show that we were proud of our uniforms.

This afternoon's platoon drill, under our lieutenant, made me very sure that, though I already feel as if I had been here for weeks, I am not yet master of my work. The drill kept me thinking. As it is no pleasure to be publicly called down, I am all the while trying to make no mistakes. A fellow must instantly—instantly!—know the difference between "Platoon right," for instance,

and "Right by squads," even though the commands may not have been given for an hour. And one must know it whether corporal or not, for half the time the corporals do not yet know it themselves, and either mumble their commands or are silent, so that they are no help. And even if a fellow knows what to do, but lags in the doing of it, then he is likely to put the whole line out. Further, freight trains rumble by at the bottom of the drill field, the wind whistles in your ears, other officers near at hand are shouting commands to other platoons, and so you are likely not to hear a command at all. But on the whole I think I am improving.

The short time that we had with the captain was enough to prove that he is, as Clay claimed, a Southerner, if only from his use of the word *like*. As we came down from the right shoulder, he said, "Don't climb your rifle lahk it was a rope." And at Present Arms, "That man is holding up his piece lahk it was a Christmas tree." "Swing your arms," said he, "lahk you were proud of yo'selves!" Other little localisms slip in. When a man had explained a question that the captain at first did not understand, he said when he grasped it, "Oh, Ah see; Ah didn't locate yo'." But it is a pity to misspell so broadly. The differences of accent, though evident, are slight and pleasing, even musical.

Love from,

DICK.

FROM ERASMUS CORDER, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR IN HARVARD UNIVERSITY, TO HIS WIFE

Plattsburg, Monday, Sept. 11.

MY DEAR PRISCILLA:—

You will want to know, now that I have shaken down into this life, how on the whole it suits me. I feel as if I had been here a fortnight, such being the power of routine. You know I am among perfect strangers, for though Nelson is in my company, I see very little of him. We actually have not looked each other up since Saturday. And though Watson of the Philosophy department and Jones of the Library staff are both here, they are in other companies, and the best I have done is to pay each of them a hurried call. The real life is the life of the squad, and I find myself among interesting fellows.

The work is not too hard, for the officers give us periods of rest, and we are gradually hardening up. I live very cautiously, always change my stockings and rest my feet whenever I come off the drill-field, and whenever I can I lie down for a nap. But I am getting so lively that I find myself tempted to ignore these precautions, and hope that before long I can take not only the work but the fun as it comes. The excellent stockings which you knit for me are not too heavy nor too hot; you were wise to mark every thing that I wear, as in this camp articles of clothing very much re-

semble one another. My sewing kit, with all its threaded needles, called out the wonder of the corporal the other day, and the whole squad stood around and admired it.

I hope in time to attain a more military carriage, but it is a hard fight with habit. I wish I were as springy as these boys around me; even as I work the fat out of my bacon, I don't find myself perfectly elastic. For I get a bit stiff in the knees from long standing at the manual; and as the evening chill comes on I find it gets more into my joints than I like. And so I am watching the development of a problem with which I, that is, my mind, can have very little to do. Question: shall I get stiffer as the days grow colder, until on the hike they will discharge me as an old man; or will it all work off as I get used to the exercise, until I am limber? It is really a very serious matter, my dear, this being forty-five years old. One should turn life into a profession, and study how to become young. There are a number of men of my age or older here at camp, and I find we all have this same preoccupation, and very eagerly ask each other how we are getting on, and give advice. And the hike—that looms ahead of us all as an ordeal which we are afraid we shan't pass.

I never tire of the view from our drill field. The mountains are never twice the same, and the lake is quite as changeable; they vary their aspect every hour from morning to evening. We

are lucky just now in our full moon, to light us about the unaccustomed streets. In contrast are the ugly tents, which yet have a romantic interest in their possible warlike use, and in their perfect uniformity, which is so forbidding that it becomes interesting. And for one who has come from a skirted sea-side resort, it is not unpleasant to see around me nothing but men, men, men.

Your letters make me feel easy about the family. We are very lucky that Mildred did not get a bad fall when the handle of her bicycle broke. Tell Florence to make a proper distinction between *to* and *too*, and to form her capital Cs more carefully. Little Elinor's letters are much admired in the whole tent. It must be about time to pick the Gravenstein apples. Tell Robert to handle them as if they were eggs.

You see I am well. Do not worry about me. Love to all the youngsters.

ERASMUS.

PRIVATE RICHARD GODWIN TO HIS MOTHER

Plattsburg, Tuesday, September 12.

DEAR MOTHER:—

Today we have had something new. We have so far been drilling in close order formation, so called because we always maintain our front and rear ranks together as such. This order has two purposes, one for parade and review, the other for quickest marching to any given place. But for fighting, which after all is our real purpose, the close order must be discarded in favor of extended order, which you will understand better if I call it skirmish line formation. Here front and rear rank form in one long line, in order not to do damage to each other in firing.

Our drill field at the camp distinctly has its drawbacks. Across part of it are open drainage ditches; and another part, where no ditches are, is a slippery bog after any rain. Drilling on such a field distracts you between the natural desire to pick your footing, and the officers' constant command to keep your eyes up. We are told that the city of Plattsburg is very generous in providing this ground, and doubtless it was to begin with; yet I wonder if after two very prosperous seasons, due to our presence and our visitors', the city couldn't afford to put a few hundred dollars (it would cost no more) into finishing draining the field with tile, and filling the ditches in.

That would give us good dry ground and firm footing.

At any rate, it was a relief to be marched this morning to the military post, to practice our new formations on its great smooth field. The parade-ground is a wide level space by the edge of the lake, and on the inner side is a long row of the married officers' houses, all exactly alike, yet with shrubs and vines not unhomelike. I saw three children at one place, two at another, plus two nursemaids; but as a whole the houses look deserted, as they are. For all our regiments of this department are on the Mexican border, and while papa is away it is natural for mamma to take the babies to visit grandpa, if indeed she doesn't go to the border too. As a consequence of this absence of the infantry regiments, we are ministered to here by some companies of coast artillery, which are useless to the government in this crisis, and so are unwillingly serving here as cooks, waiters, and equipment orderlies. Our officers are scraped up from everywhere, the captain of my company even coming from Panama. Unless they can persuade themselves that there is to be no more fighting in Mexico, they must hate to settle down here as mere missionaries of the preparedness movement.

Well, we were taken onto the field, and were given our first dose of skirmish drill. The captain explained how the squad should do the expanding movement on which the whole is based.

"Being at a halt," as the regulations are fond of saying, the corporal takes position three paces in front of his Number Two man, extends his arms as a signal or gives his order, and the men at a run take given positions on a line with him. A corporal and his squad being ordered to illustrate this for the benefit of the rest of us, the corporal forgot to stand fast, and so away the eight of them went, heading directly for the lake, the captain watching them with amusement, the rest of us snickering. Over the edge of the bluff they went, we heard crashes in the bushes, and presently, when the rest of us were beginning our demonstration, we saw the sheepish return of our lost squad. No one in our company will ever now forget that when we begin our deployment at a halt, we advance those three paces and no more.

You see now the real value of the corporal. He is of use in close order formation, yet there, with a little drill, the company could get along without him. But in extended order he is in independent command of the squad, takes his orders from his superior, translates them according to circumstances, and separately leads his little bunch of men to the place where they are to deploy. Moreover, since his problem varies according as we are marching or at a halt, in line or in column, and according as we are to guide centre, right, or left, the corporal needs (we proved it to-day) to have a cool head and a firm

hold of his men. In one case we go forward, in another we march to one side before deploying, in still another we make a letter S, going backward and then forward again. There was a wonderful confusion this morning, with all of us greenhorns trying to learn this new work. Moreover, since we are volunteers, and men of intelligence, and by this time pretty well acquainted, every man of us thought he understood everything, and was bursting to tell the others how it should be done.

And then began to appear which of our corporals were corporals indeed. Some squads were little Babels, each man uttering forth his voice, with the poor squad-leader either vainly trying to make himself heard, or silently trying to make his own ideas square with the contradictions of the other seven. Other squads may have been repressed volcanoes, but still they were repressed, with the corporal making his mistakes in his own way, but learning by blundering how the thing should be done. As for Squad 8, Knudsen was guarding the corporal's peace of mind. Once when Bannister had mistaken the order, and I burst out with a whispered "Too far!" Knudsen snapped at me, "No speaking to the corporal!" Now since once or twice he had given advice, that was a touch too much; but I caught a significant twinkle in Corder's eye, and held my peace. I shan't soon forget the puzzled expression on Bannister's round, honest face when he

found himself many yards out of the way, and his involuntary "Whoa!" Then Knudsen quietly took charge of us, and led us where we belonged.

"This is going to be interesting," whispered Corder to me. "Remember what I told you."

In the afternoon, among other drill work, we were taught how to make our packs. The strangely shaped piece of webbing which I once tried to describe to you, with all its straps and hooks, is a haversack worked out by a commission headed by a Major Stewart, who evolved this Stewart pack, the lightest by many pounds of any army pack in the world. Now give attention. On the ground you spread your poncho, rubber side downward. On it you lay your shelter-half and fold it till it too is an oblong, smaller than the poncho. Next you fold one blanket thrice and lay it with its stripe lengthwise of the poncho. Lay on it your tent-pegs, rope, bacon box and condiment can, a change of underclothes, your soap and razor, tooth-brush and towel. Lap over it the edges of the poncho and the shelter-half. Now roll this from the blanket end, packing tightly; and when you approach the end of the poncho, fold eight inches of it toward you, and into this pocket work the roll. Thus you have made a tight waterproof sausage, firmly enough packed to be thrown about without coming open. The first stage of making your pack is now finished.

The roll is now, by means only to be learned by actual doing, to be strapped to the haversack, which also carries the bayonet and, in its big pocket, the meat-can, knife, fork, and spoon. The pack is next, by its complicated straps, attached to the belt, and the whole is put on like a vest, the arms through its broad straps. These should be so tightened that the top of the pack comes well above the level of the shoulders, so that the straps will not drag and cut. The belt is buckled in front, but should be loose enough to hang over the hips. Thus the whole weight of the pack and belt is carried by the shoulders, which are braced back as by the old-fashioned shoulder brace, leaving the chest free for expansion, and carrying no weight.

The pack weighs about eighteen pounds, the belt (with full canteen and cartridge pockets) another eight, the rifle nine. Thirty-five pounds, for light marching order, is much less than any other army than ours is blessed with. And this outfit is to be, as our captain grimly remarked today, our constant companions. Oh my poor back!

I know it will be hard to read this letter, my hand shakes so. This is because all this morning I carried my rifle "at trail," which means that I gripped it a foot from the muzzle and carried it with the butt just off the ground, the butt constantly exercising a heavy leverage on the wrist. Naturally I am lame.

Your letters come daily, which saves me much anguish. At each distribution of the mail there is much quiet disappointment, which later is very likely to express itself in the tent. Said Reardon today, the silent man of the squad, "I'm going to write a letter home that will raise hell." Bannister, whose wife had missed a day, remarked gravely, "I'll have to say something to her." And Pickle came into the tent mad, savagely remarking, "If I don't get a letter next mail, I'm going home." Luckily it came.

But yet the men don't always sympathize with each other. Clay was bitterly complaining of his luck. Said Knudsen, "But man, you can't expect an answer to your letter yet. It had to go to Maryland." Then Bannister, taking his mind from his own disappointment, added, "And great Scott! look at the letter you writ. It was so long that she would need three whole days to read it in, before she could begin her answer. And as to your writing such an amount to your mother—!" "It was only eight pages," said handsome Clay, blushing. Bannister had no mercy. "Only eight pages? Man, it was a young novel! To your mother? Your grandmother, more likely." Clay was silenced.

Our fourth blankets are served out, and we sleep very snug. Food is the same, wholesome but not delicate. David and Pickle, having each a sweet tooth, buy rather freely outside, and David occasionally slips away for a hotel meal.

As a consequence, they sometimes need doctoring. The rest of the squad, whether from economy or on principle, stick to the daily mess and are well. Love from

DICK.

Telegram from Private Richard Godwin to His Mother at Home

Plattsburg, Wednesday, Sep. 13.

is you know who at plattsburg and why i thought i saw her here today am well love

Dick.

Letters from the Same

Postscript, written at the top of the first sheet of the letter

I have just sent you off this telegram: Is You-know-who at Plattsburg, and why? I thought I saw her here today. Am well. Love.

Second postscript, written in the margin

I find I have written you a letter that will show you my difficulties in getting time to write. It is merely typical of my usual day.

Dear Mother:—

I begin this letter in the tent at about 5.30 in the morning, expecting the first assembly, yet trying to snatch a little time while the rest of the camp is still dressing. My hand no longer aches, but the wrist is plain stiff from yesterday's exercise at trail. I have just conned over fifty paragraphs of the drill book, getting up early for the purpose.

Free time is scarce. When the captain yesterday told us to put fifteen minutes a day on our study of the rifle, and especially in learning to squeeze (a mystery which I will expound to you when I myself have mastered it) the whole company groaned. Our time is so cut up that it is

(*The bugle and the whistle! Five minutes for assembly.*)

hard to find many minutes at a stretch which you can devote to any one thing. And yet I think it quite right that yesterday, after returning from the open order drill, squad after squad of us should of our own accord go down to the drill field and practise the new tricks, especially in preserving the squad formation while following the corporal over whatever ground and through whatever angles. Those fifteen minutes will help us today. Bannister tends quietly to his job, an amusing fellow with his little imitations of a farmer (which some day he means to be), his chuckling Yankee wit, and his interest in telling all about his wife and children at home.

Speaking of corporals, Corder has brought out new facts regarding Knudsen. Yesterday, when the tent was empty but for us three, Corder stopped Knudsen from going out while at the same time he beckoned to me. Lucy, coming in just then, stopped and listened also. "Knudsen," said Corder, "you've drilled before." "Not infantry drill," answered Knudsen. "Recently?" demanded Corder. Knudsen admitted, "All last

winter with a troop of cavalry." "Then why," demanded Corder, "didn't you say you had had experience, and try to be a corporal yourself?" "Because——"

(*Bugle again, and half an hour for breakfast. Having a little time before morning drill, I go on.*)

"Because," said Knudsen, "I didn't want to be corporal. I came here tired to death from a long hard worrying year in getting that factory of mine in good running order. I don't want to have anything more to do, for the whole of this month, with managing a stupid gang of men." "Thanks!" said Corder and I together, and we bowed as if we had been drilled to do it, exactly together. Knudsen was rather taken aback, but he laughed and apologized. "You ought to be corporal of a squad," said Corder. "Do you want to get me out of this one?" demanded Knudsen. "Bannister is all right. I tell you I'm here for a rest, and I want to escape the captain's notice." We promised (*Bugle!*) to help him keep in his obscurity. Lucy stood silent, but full of admiration.

(*Sergeant's whistle, and Pickle comes running in. "Make up the packs without the ponchos!" Good by for the present.*)

(*Four hours later, after skirmish practice in the roughest kind of low underbrush, in which I nearly lost a legging, and wished for a pair of wooden elbows.*)

The company was split in two this morning, those men who had used high-power rifles being

taken away by the captain, whose specialty is shooting, while the rest of us went with the lieutenant up the Peru road, and turned into an old overgrown blueberry pasture. Luckily there were no blueberries, for whenever we threw ourselves flat we should have squashed more on our clothes than we should have had time to eat. Bannister being with the shooters, we (such as remained of our squad) were put with a neighboring corporal who did not know his business, and

(*Forty minutes for mess. After a cigarette, I am trying to snatch a few minutes now*)

and speedily had the lieutenant "bawling us out." So very quietly, but very firmly, with Corder again winking at me in perfect delight, Knudsen took over corporal and squad, and managed us in an undertone from his position of number two. He kept the squad together, told the corporal when to spread it out, and that innocent person willingly gave himself into Knudsen's hands. We had plenty to do in a series of

(*Bugle and whistle. Off for afternoon drill.—Now at 3.24 P. M. after learning to pitch shelter tents*)

imaginary attacks, sometimes in showers, and we steaming in our ponchos or shivering without them, ploughing through the wet bushes or throwing ourselves flat in them. Then, from whatever positions we found ourselves in, we had to "simulate firing" at an enemy until my neck was lame from trying to hold my head up, and my elbows were sore from their rough lodgings. The corporal

was perfectly docile, and Knudsen even hooked his fingers in the back of the man's belt and pulled him here and there.

(*Sergeant's whistle, and again Pickle comes diving into the tent. "Undershirts only, for the sun's out hot. Take your towel if you want to swim." That means calisthenics.—After forty minutes.*)

Out we went to the drill field, took off (most of us) our remaining shirts, and were put through nine hundred exercises till we dripped, while ladies in their automobiles watched us from the top of the slope. Hope they enjoyed it. When it was over we were dismissed where we stood and streamed yelling to the beach, where we found Champlain, at the hot end of this changeable day, able to repay us for all our sufferings.

Well, to finish the corporal story. The squad were perfect lambs in Knudsen's hands, none daring to bleat, while all around us the other squads were disputing in undertones and going wrong amid storms of discontent. When we had got back to the tent, and had lost our emergency non-com., Knudsen began to praise him for an excellent corporal. "He was good so long as you had him in charge," said Corder. "Especially good on that last deployment when you yanked him into place. If you don't want to be promoted, man, let your superiors blunder, and don't correct them." "The lieutenant wasn't looking," answered Knudsen meekly.

Now about (*call for supper*) about that tele-

gram (*call for regimental conference. I am now at the company tent waiting for the captain's conference.*) about that telegram of mine. *Where is Vera Wadsworth?* For when we were on the parade ground at the post this afternoon, learning to pitch our shelter tents (which is another complicated affair, the explanation of which I will reserve) we found ourselves deserted for a while by our mentor the lieutenant, and were at the mercy of green sergeants, who knew something, to be sure, but in whom we had no confidence. Someone discovered him,—Pickle. "Gee," said that exponent of classic English, "spot the lieutenant with a skirt." And there he was at a distance, in talk with a tall girl, handsome, unless I miss my guess, and Vera herself, if I have any knowledge of her figure, and of a certain hat and parasol she lately affected. Quite at home there too, without a chaperon, on the walk in front of the officers' houses, and without a waiting automobile that brought her or would carry her away. What could bring her here? Were her military relatives at this post? At any rate, I thought they were now at the border. I hope it wasn't she; but the lieutenant, as he returned to us, smiled as men usually do as they think of Vera. Look up her whereabouts and let me know.

I see the captain coming to conference. Good night,

DICK.

[redacted]

TELEGRAM FROM MRS. RICHARD GODWIN, SENIOR, TO HER SON AT PLATTSBURG, DATED THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 1916

she is taking charge of her cousins children at the plattsburg post am writing mother.

PRIVATE GODWIN'S DAILY LETTER

Thursday, Sept. 14, 1916.

DEAR MOTHER:—

Your telegram, reaching me, made me uncomfortable at first. However, I don't suppose I shall meet Vera, so I shall put the matter out of my mind.

Last night there was a rain, which wakened me as it came down pretty heavily. Knudsen, with a groan, got out of bed and put on his poncho. "What is up?" I asked, whispering; and he, likewise trying not to wake the others, answered, "Rain is coming in. Must fix the tent-cap." So I got up and helped him. I did not tell you, I think, that the tent is open at the top like a wigwam, providing perfect ventilation; but when the rain comes in it wets the clothes hung around the poles, and also the rifles. But a canvas cap, which in fair weather is laid back, may be dragged over the opening by ropes hauled from below, and Knudsen and I managed to close

it. Maybe you think it was fun, falling over the tent-ropes in the windy dark.

By daylight it was raining still, and we were ordered out in our ponchos for the assembly. Poor Lucy has so far always been helped into his, and stood looking at it hopelessly. "Which side is front?" As usual, Knudsen came to his help. "The long side. No, that's inside out. Don't you see the collar? Button it under your chin. Now button the sides of the lower part round behind you. Fix the two remaining corners to hang down over your hands. Now you're good for anything that may happen all day."

"All day?" demanded poor Lucy. "Do you mean to say we'll drill in the rain?" "Shall we sit and suck our thumbs here?" demanded amused Pickle. Knudsen, more subtle, merely remarked, "Oh, damn the weather!" and Lucy stiffened as he got the idea that the rain wouldn't hurt him.

He is really improving. Daily he manfully shaves himself for practice (every other day would be enough) and his early wounds are healing nicely, while he has none of recent date. The poor lad's hands are pretty sore from handling his gun. The captain halted before him the other day as we were doing the manual, and fixed him with a cold eye. "Hit that gun harder," he said. "You can't hurt it with your hands." David faintly smiled, and now he is trying to callous his palms.

We ate our breakfasts in our ponchos: there is no place to hang them up, and they make very good bibs. And in our ponchos we marched; they covered the packs, making us look like pedlers, or as Knudsen said, like camels. We kept our rifles dry under them, but were not long dry ourselves, for these service ponchos not being exactly waterproof, soon wet through at the knees, or wherever else we rubbed as we marched. I am therefore rather envious of David's fine new poncho, of best rubber. If I come again I shall have one of my own—a poncho, remember, and not the civilian rubber coat with which some have supplied themselves.

They marched us this morning first to the post gymnasium, and there we sat in a great half-circle while Major Stewart explained to us the history of army packs, and some facts about the one that bears his name. Our men in other wars have abandoned their packs on entering battle, they were such encumbrances in skirmishing. In the battle of San Juan thousands of packs were dropped by the roadside, and the men finished their fighting without rations. But the new pack may be worn both in marching and in shooting; further, on expecting battle the rolls may be made short, and then are strapped to the lower part of the haversack. This part, on drawing out a leather strap, falls to the ground, and the men go forward lightened of the heaviest part of their burden, but yet carrying food enough for the

day's work. At its worst the Stewart pack is, compared to the old blanket roll, many pounds to the good.

And yet, mother, though wise Mr. Bryan has bragged of our ability to put an army of a million men into the field overnight, of the few thousands at the border a fair half are still equipped with the old pack. Is the rest of the million to be proportionately well fitted out?

In order to show that the pack will fit anyone, the Major called for the tallest man in the regiment. A strapping big fellow of perhaps thirty-five got up and stepped confidently onto the platform, amid the cheers of the crowd, and the Major prepared to strap the pack onto him. But I heard from behind me various urgent cries of "Go on up!" and a fine young fellow, straight as a lance, walked round the seated men, and also stepped upon the platform. Though much slenderer than the other, the newcomer was a good inch taller. A roar of applause came from the regiment, and the first man, understanding, laughed and stepped down. Then he turned back and spoke to the younger man, evidently asking his height. "How tall? How tall?" demanded the crowd, and the young fellow held up six fingers, indicating six feet six. A similar scene occurred for the shortest man, a thin little fellow getting the honor; then a third aspirant, being evidently taller, was laughed back. But what struck me was the reception given a bald-

headed, round-headed, roly-poly little mustached fellow, who hesitated near at hand. The crowd instantly nicknamed him. "Come on, Cupid, and measure yourself." But Cupid had his doubts, and so retired.

The lecture being over, luckily so was the rain; but the captain took us out on that rolling country that flanks the Peru road, and gave us a fight with an imaginary enemy, through wet bushes, across a dump, over and among little sand and gravel pits, finally ambushing with great care an innocent Catholic cemetery. As we did this badly, on our advance exposing ourselves to the fire from the ornamental statuary, we had to do it over again. It was difficult practice, keeping in line; but it was fairly exciting to throw yourself, at command, flat on your face wherever you happened to be. I thus gained intimate acquaintance with a pile of tin cans, a scrub hard pine, and a big hill of black ants. As the proper method of moving sideways, when in skirmish line, is to roll, I rolled away from the latter position, not to the betterment of my poncho.

This afternoon, again in rain, we marched to the gymnasium once more, and the building not having been ventilated, found the air very oppressive after our hearty dinner. The captain talked to us of the rifle and its use in target shooting; but conditions were against him, for it was a very sleepy crowd that listened. I found myself drowsy, men were nodding all about me, and

Corder declared that he had 247 distinct and separate naps. But it was necessary to rouse when we were required to adjust our slings and take position for snapping at a mark. The sling is the strap of the gun, which when fitted to the upper arm, and the arms and body braced against the pull of it, in some mysterious way gives steadiness. Our calisthenics were partly devised, I am sure, to help us take the contortionists' attitudes necessary for this graceful exercise. But nothing, not even our skirmishing, prepared my elbows for our final stunt of throwing ourselves prone on the hard floor, and in approved target-shooting posture snapping ten shots at the third button of the captain's shirt, while the lieutenant counted ninety seconds by his watch.

Returning, we found that rifle-inspection was scheduled, with a special warning that the captain was not satisfied with the way we kept the guns. So we got out our single cleaning-rod and passed it from cot to cot, with the nitro-solvent and the oil, and such few patches as yet remained to us. For no amount of them will satisfy one company, or even one squad, and we are always short. The rifles cleaned, we policed the tent, making it absolutely neat. Now such are the acoustic properties of these canvas dwellings that we can hear what goes on in our neighbors', and so it happened that we heard, from tent 6, Randall's controversy with the rest of his squad. It is seldom that one man will talk down seven, but

we heard the whole of his obstinate defense, how that he hadn't known that he was tent-policeman for the day, that no one had policed the tent yesterday, or eke the day before, that it was a sin and a shame to make him do other men's work, that especially in the matter of the smoky lantern, which no one had cleaned since the opening of camp, it was wrong to make him bear the burden of accumulated neglect. Some of us chuckled at all this, but at such a clamor raised for the purpose of escaping duty David listened soberly. "He works very hard to avoid work," said the boy, whose good manners will not let him evade any duty which he clearly perceives—though I will admit that his perceptions are still rather dull.

The row died down, we heard the rattle of the lantern, and then Randall's voice. "I was only jollying you." No answer, but still the lantern rattled. "I'm willing to do my share of the work." Still no answer. "Oh, well," said Randall finally, "if you feel that way about it, give me the lantern. I'll clean it." We heard the corporal's voice. "I've got it nearly cleaned. And you can squeak out of your work, Randall; but just the same, we've got our opinion of you."

I thought the corporal had the best of it. It is no small penalty to carry around the squad's opinion of one's shortcomings.

At inspection time the rain was heavy, and word was passed to wait for the captain in our

tents. For this we blessed him, seeing no fun in standing in line in the street; and Lucy found that after all the weather is considered in the army. When it was the turn of tent 8 we lined up facing each other, and the captain, stooping to get his hat safely through the door, came in between our two lines. He said "Just give me your guns as I'm ready for them," a deceptively mild beginning, we feared, knowing how sharp he could be. But at the fourth gun he said, "The rifles are not so bad." I handed him mine, breech open, hoping that it was up to the average. He tried to look down the barrel; then when he snorted I declare I felt like a boy before his schoolmaster. But to my relief he laughed, took from the muzzle the plug that I had put there in expectation of a long wait in the rain, looked through the barrel, and passed it. When he left he told us to turn out for Retreat with ponchos only—for which again we blessed him.

As the absence of conference, on account of rain, gives me extra time, I shall write a dissertation, not on roast pig, but just on pig, in other words on table manners. Our company has a corner of one of the mess shacks, into which we are marched. When first we came our method was to stand, hats on, by our places, where our cups and plates were waiting upside down. At the command "H Company, take seats!" (and much merriment a sergeant once made when he commanded "Be seated!") we took off our hats

very decorously, hung them up (whether behind us on the walls or in front of us under the tables) sat down, turned over our plates, and reached for the dishes. Now some tables, or sections of tables, still maintain this lofty standard of good breeding, by the sheer fact that the most of the men are well bred and the rest are ashamed not to be. But where the proportion is reversed degeneration is rapid. The men furtively hang up their hats and turn over their plates before the order, and if a bunch of them take to doing this, there appears to be no remedy for it. "It's up to you," said a sergeant to us on the first day. "You can be gentlemen, or you can be the other thing."

So it is after we are seated. Certain actions are natural, as determined by the fact that while there is plenty of food, there is never on the table at one time enough of any one thing. (A few more dishes and platters would apparently remedy this.) Further, we haven't time to wait. So we begin on what happens to be in front of us, cereal first at one end of the table, fruit first in the middle (if there is any!), eggs and bacon further along; thus by degrees we work through the bill of fare. And this is not improper.

But when the fellows take to laying in supplies of whatever is within reach, and surrounding themselves with plates heaped with the substance of future courses, it is first unfair and next demoralizing. If one man hogs the available supply for merely later use, he teaches his neighbor

to do the same in self-defense. And so you can watch the proof of the old copy-book motto concerning evil communications.

A word concerning reaching at table, for your guidance, my dear mother, when next you find yourself at a table d'hote. I calculate that for this method of helping one's self there is a wrong way and a right. Imagine yourself beside a busy person beyond whom lies the wished-for dish. If you reach with the arm nearest the dish, your arm goes across your neighbor's plate, a fact which my neighbors have frequently proved to me. But if you reach with the arm furthest from the dish you will not cross his plate, your body swinging your arm in over the table. I come to this interesting social discovery rather late in life, on account of the excellent table service to which you have accustomed me.

There goes the warning bugle. If I am not safely tucked up in my little bed at taps, the sergeant will say "Tut! Tut!" So good night.

DICK.

Mrs. Godwin to Her Son Richard, in a Letter Dated September 14, 1916

Your telegram, my dear, dear Dick, I have just replied to, and will now add such facts as I know concerning Vera's going to Plattsburg. What I can tell you comes through her sister Frances, with whom I have always been more intimate than Vera, even when you two were engaged. And Frances has come several times to the house, now that you are gone. I asked her to.

If the breaking of your engagement was a blow to your pride, my dear boy, think what it was to Vera's. I don't know anyone prouder than she. And to publish the fact that you two had changed your minds—! She wanted to go away, but the Wadsworths are nearly as poor as they are proud, and she didn't feel justified. Then there came a letter from her cousin Dolly, who married that handsome Captain Marsh and was stationed at Plattsburg. Dolly's husband is now on the border, and Dolly could stand the separation no longer. She was going to Texas, and one of the cousins must come to Plattsburg and take charge of her house. The children wouldn't be a burden, because there was the very capable nurse who had taken care of them since they were born. And old Colonel Marsh wouldn't be a bother, having a certain routine which got him through his days very well. Of course it would be very dull with

all the officers away from the post, and those at the instruction camp constantly busy. But one of the sisters must come and relieve her, or Dolly would go mad. She is all bound up in that husband of hers.

It was plain that she expected Frances to come, being so domestic, and so old-fashioned-womanly. But Vera, you know, in spite of her suffragism and her feminism has always been kept by her father from having anything to do, and so she had nothing to occupy herself with just when she needed occupation most. So she declared that she must go, and of course Frances let her. "But you know," said Frances to me, looking up from her sewing with a little twinkle, "I know Vera will be in hot water with the old Colonel from the first, she is so out of sympathy with war, and the military life, and all it has (or hasn't) to offer women." That's her sex independence, you see.

Vera can't know that you're there. She went just before you so suddenly made up your mind to go, and Frances hasn't written her of your going. I told her I shouldn't tell you, and begged her not to write Vera. And unless Vera recognizes you, which isn't likely, she will know nothing of your whereabouts.

It is odd that David Farnham is in your squad, and amusing that I should have seen his mother only yesterday. She never was so proud of anything in her life as of the fact that he is at Platts-

burg. So she has become a perfect nuisance to her friends, talking of him so. I met her at a Bridge, and she was crazy to see me, David having written her that you two are together. So she got herself put at my table, and our two partners were furious, because the game dwindled away to nothing, she talking of David all the time. You would have thought that he was the whole army and navy of these United States. I was at first quite frightened that she would ask me your opinion of his fitness. But not at all; that was quite settled in her mind. She talked about his deciding to go, and how he made her see that it was the best thing for him and for the country—and there is a story to that, because it was her husband that insisted on her letting David go, when she would have kept him. And she talked of his equipment, how horrid it was that he couldn't dress like the officers, especially his legs, they are so handsome; but he wasn't allowed to wear puttees or leather leggings, but must wear those canvas things. And she gave him everything new; she even mentioned those French silk pajamas that so amuse you. And then she was indignant that he was not at once made a lieutenant, or something. And the men in his tent, except you, Dick, are of no social standing whatever. Of course she hadn't heard of his being called Lucy. She was so satisfied that I wanted to tell her. Do write me more of him.

Lovingly MOTHER.

Private Godwin's Daily Letter

Before morning drill, Friday, Sep. 15, 1916.

Dear Mother:—

Our good Lucy is a different lad from the one that landed here a week ago. Did I tell you that he has come to the heroic resolution to clean his own gun? I suppose the strongest factor in that is his detestation of Randall. It's quite common here for fellows to get the regulars to clean their guns, and there's more to be said for that than for many other indulgences: at least it's better for the rifles. The regulars drive a good little trade of this kind, and David has twice sent out his piece to be laundered, as it were. But I know that he perceived that the sentiment of the squad is against it, and I think he's sensitive enough to understand the reasons. We're all here to learn to be soldiers, and taking care of his gun is a pretty important part of a soldier's job. And then we're an economical crowd. David and I are the only ones in the squad that didn't have to pinch a little in order to get here; even Corder spoke recently of the expense as something unwelcome. So it's really rather bad form to pay for outside service. Yet for all that, David couldn't quite bring himself to do the dirty work.

So when a regular came to us yesterday, before inspection, and asked for guns to clean, David began to get his gun out of the rack. He looked a

little uneasily at Knudsen, but the Swede wouldn't see it; he kept squinting through his own piece. The regular, to make matters sure, said, "Mr. Randall told me you'd give me your gun. I always clean his." With the funniest little set of his jaw, as if he didn't quite know how to do it, David reached for the cleaning rod. "Well," he said, "Mr. Randall is mistaken. I clean my gun myself." Then he sat down beside Knudsen, as if sure that the other would teach him—in which he was right. His dirty hands at the end were a sad sight to him, and yet I think he was proud of them too.

This morning Randall, who hasn't learned (and I question if he ever will) how unwelcome he is in our tent, came in to brag a little—and of what! There stands to the south of us a big hotel whose bulk is visible from the camp, a strong temptation to all our luxurious budding Napoleons. Randall was there last night, and came in to tell us what he had to eat. Particularly he enjoyed, he said, the fresh asparagus tips. Pickle's envy overcame his dislike, and he had nothing to say. But David's eye gleamed. "Fresh asparagus tips?" he asked. "Scarcely that." "Indeed?" demanded Randall. "I know asparagus when I eat it." "But not fresh asparagus," countered David. "It's not to be had in September. Canned tips, Randall, that's all." And Pickle, in his relief, cackled aloud.

I have of late told you so little of our officers

that I must say something about them here, of officers as a class, and ours in particular. We are at the stage of theoretical conferences—after the regimental meeting each night on the drill-field is a company conference at each company tent, where the non-coms are expected to go, and where all others are invited. Consequently the captain or lieutenant has forty men there each night, crowded close around the table and packed at the open side of the tent. We are learning the theory of field skirmish work, with a glance at the method of advancing by road into an enemy's country.

And I must say that our officers have at their tongues' ends the whole of the principle that is embodied in that strange little book, the drill regulations. As soon as you have got beyond the mere parade-ground work (and that is all the civilian ever sees) the book brings you to a region where nothing else is considered than the one thing, attack, attack, attack. There is something very grim and inexorable in this primer of war, this A B C of the principles of destruction. And if the innocent little pocket manual contains a codification, so condensed as to be amazing, of the ways to slay your enemy, the officers are ready with every possible amplification of its dry paragraphs. Get forward, always get forward, is their intention. Make your fire effective, make it destructive, make it overwhelming. With word, with blackboard plan and section, with theory,

with practical illustration, each night they lay before us some new field of this really awful knowledge. We study it eagerly. Two years ago I should have been horrified at these doctrines that they preach. Today I regard knowledge of them, by a sufficient number of able-bodied men, as the great need of the country.

So much, dear mother, of things which to speak of in detail would only pain your kind heart. As to the men that teach us, I can say that they improve upon acquaintance. Each of them, the captain and lieutenant, has his own way of teaching. In the lieutenant a coolness of statement that seems to imply a calm unshakableness, as of one who has measured all risks and sees that they amount to nothing. In the captain equal clearness but more fire. Both see that the only safety is in attack. They answer our questions quite differently, the lieutenant with a crisp completeness that leaves nothing to inquire but much to ponder on, the captain with an illuminating phrase that humanizes everything and brings instant understanding. Their men will go wherever they send them in a fight, for the lieutenant because they know he must be right, for the captain because they feel it.

We never, I think, can know the lieutenant very well, because of that quality which I saw in him at his first appearance before us, an aloofness that taunts us into the determination to please him. The captain I am sure we know already, a

worker, a driver, but one who shows us that he understands our mistakes by the very keenness of his irony. "I have found you men to place the hip anywhere between the armpit and the knee. So I will place it for you at the watch pocket. That is your official hip, gentlemen." "Yes, skirmishers in Europe are now wearing steel helmets. But if you men don't better learn to keep under cover you won't need steel helmets, you'll need battleships." "You can't take too many precautions in the use of your guns. In this game with me out in front, I'm an advocate of safety first."

The men like him, but more than that, they respect him. You know, mother, that I can tell something at first hand about learning one's job. But these officers put the average civilian to shame. I doubt if there is stronger professional feeling, or a higher standard of professional achievement, anywhere in the world. If all the other officers are like our two, West Pointers are a formidable body of men.

DICK.

Extracts from the Letters of Vera Wadsworth to Her Sister Frances

Sep. 6, 1916.

Dear Frances:—

You can't imagine what a relief it is to be where there are no men. That may seem to you a curious statement, for here there are practically no women at all, and nothing but men in the landscape from morning till night. But there are no men buzzing about. It was disgusting to me that no sooner was my engagement to Dick broken than the rushing recommenced. I am so glad to be where no one pays me any attention at all. The place will be flooded in a few days with a thousand new rookies, but they will be nothing else to me than trees or bushes, and I can still have peace.

There are ladies here whom I have met, and shall meet again. Only I feel no interest in them just now, except that the two I am likeliest to see most of are such as always rouse my pity, overburdened with the cares of children and a social position on a small salary. And the money of one of them has just stopped coming in because her husband, at the border, allowed an emergency purchase which the auditing department at Washington will not pass. You know that in such a case the officer's pay stops until the deficiency is

made up or the matter is explained. No one questions his honesty, but his wife and children suffer. And a man will ask a woman to take that risk with him!

The Colonel is the nicest old gentleman, very courteous. There is no doubt that army officers have delightful manners; he begs my pardon every time he lights his pipe. Cannot afford cigars, of course. And threadbare, but very neat. But what is the use of courtesy and self-denial if you believe in war, make war your business?

He and I have had it out already. Neither of us made the slightest impression on the other. His argument is the old one: be prepared, and people will let you alone. He cannot be made to see that if a man has a gun, or a nation has an army, the temptation to use it will some day become too strong.

I haven't given him my opinion of the army as a profession *for women*. He always ends our discussion with a charming compliment. But I am aching to point out to him the condition of the house we live in, where the new has all come off of Dolly's wedding presents, the chair covers are wearing out, holes are coming in the napkins, and there is no money for replacements. How Dolly could pay for her trip to the border, or keep herself there, I can't think. Suppose the children are sick!

Oh, my dear, I am so weary of genteel poverty!

Why couldn't I have married Dick? He worked so hard, and got himself such a fine position, that we should have been so comfortable! And then we had to conclude that we weren't made for each other. I do so regret it, and yet there was nothing else possible. Perhaps I'm not made for marriage after all.

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September 12th.

The town, as I told you, is flooded with recruits, of the amateur variety. But our post is a little oasis all by itself, and except that they come and drill on the parade ground, they do not come near us. Did I tell you that out in front of the house, merely across a driveway, is this great field where the training companies manœuvre morning and afternoon, and where they occasionally have regimental or battalion drill? Luckily our small piazza is all grown over with vines, so that I can sit outside for the air and yet not myself be seen. The old Colonel watches it all with the keenest interest, tells me what they do and what they fail to do, and I am even learning the meaning of a few military terms. He approves of the way in which the new men learn, and is very proud of what they are achieving. But it has got so with me that I pay no more attention to the drilling men than to automobiles going by. And when their hours are over the place is almost as deserted as before.

Sept. 13.

I am rather annoyed by the fact that now that the training camp is settling into its routine, its officers—the unmarried ones—find time to come calling on the Colonel. Of course the dear old man is delighted to see them, and doesn't tell me that he has helped to spread the report that an eligible young woman is staying with him. I wish he hadn't. For I have found out that military men are twice as bad as civilians. They are aggressive by nature, or they wouldn't have chosen the profession; they are aggressive by education; three minutes after they are introduced they begin a flirtation. There is a lieutenant Pendleton here for whom I am sure I am the twenty-seventh, so skilful is he in his operations. I have known him two days, and I expect him to propose tomorrow. There are three others who are only a day, or at most two days, behind. You know them, the dashing, fascinating kind.

Another officer, Lt. Pendleton's captain, named Kirby, I cannot quite make out. He doesn't make love; he discusses tactics with the colonel. Yet he comes quite regularly, and keeps me in sight. He seems grimmer, more tenacious than the others; I'm glad he gives his time to the Colonel rather than to me. His voice has a curious quality, a most unmilitary gentleness. Pendleton, when he gets you in a corner, purrs to you alone; yet you feel that he has claws. His voice rings on the parade ground; I'm sure of it. I can't make out

what Captain Kirby's would sound like. There is a deceptive sympathy to it, deceptive because I feel in him much purpose. When an army officer can't flirt he either likes his profession too little or he likes it too much.

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Sep. 14.

This morning, on our little porch, I was sitting sewing behind the vines when Captain Kirby came marching his company onto the parade ground before the house. And then I learned what his voice was like, my dear. Not gentle at all; very deep, very strong, curiously resonant, as if he were shouting through a trumpet. And how do you suppose he treated his men, so many of whom are gentlemen, or older than he, or earning bigger salaries. Like schoolboys! I first saw him when he was standing out in front of them, holding in his hand, swinging by the strap, a rifle that he must have taken from one of them. Said he: "When you're at route step, I want you not to carry your guns like suit-cases. You aren't a gang of porters. If I had the money I'd tip you all; but cut out this red-cap stuff. And don't carry it *so*." He put it across his shoulders, pointing right and left. "You'll put out the eye of the man on your right, and bash the ear of the man on your left. Now remember, Nature is a great provider. She has made shoulders specially for the carrying of rifles. Carry your rifle on one

shoulder or the other, or hang them by the straps from one shoulder or the other. And by no other way." As if they had to obey him in every little thing!

Then he worked them! Nothing satisfied him. At each mistake, a blast of sarcasm. He spoke of the "accordion-pleated line." He gave a fling at a lost corporal: "As soon as we recover our derelict flanking squad, now about a hundred yards ahead." The men came slinking back. He withered one individual. "That belt is on exactly right. Except that it's upside down and inside out, it's exactly right." At whatever distance he went, I could hear every word. And whenever the company came close, I could hear the men in the ranks, murmur, murmur, murmur. You can't treat such men so. Of course they're disgusted with him.

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Sep. 15.

Such a humiliation today! And such a discovery! I suppose you didn't tell me that Dick was here because you thought I'd prefer not to know it. We're perfectly aware of each other's neighborhood now. This is the way of it.

This afternoon, being tired of the continual drilling on the parade ground, I slipped away before it could begin, and leaving the Colonel at his nap, went walking out a gravel road that I've for some time wished to explore. It took me

along a rather desolate tract of scrub land, with nothing ahead but the distant Adirondacks; so at last, seeing a little hill to the left, I thought I'd try if I could see the lake from it, and perhaps sit there awhile in quiet. I struck out across this piece of very desolate country, with little bushes growing but no grass, not good for pasture nor for anything but one purpose which I didn't then suspect. Soon I found myself walking along a ditch which kept cutting me off from the hill, a ditch in the driest of sandy land and as deep as my chin, all shored up with cut poles, or sometimes with plank, or with bundles of twigs, or with willow basket work. And then I saw it was a trench!

The Plattsburgers must have made it. It ran all about, experimentally. It had here a shelter of sandbags, there a dugout, there a kitchen. It was made in different ways to show how to use material, I suppose. Really it was very clever. And then when I came too near it at one place, to study it, the rotten wood gave way with me, and so as not to have to fall I was forced to jump, right down into it. And there I was! When I tried to get up at the half-broken place, I was overwhelmed by a shower of sand. Everywhere else the walls were too high for me to climb out. So I took to walking along it, and it twisted all around, with passages like a maze, but nowhere a place to climb. At one corner I met a horrible great snake, helpless down there too. But it

went one way and I went the other, till I came to a little niche with a cover overhead, and a loop-hole looking along the waste of scrub. Outside a little sign said, "Machine-gun emplacement." And there I stood looking out for a sign of help.

Then I heard Captain Kirby's voice, no one could mistake it, and I was relieved till I understood what he was saying. "Less noise, men! You couldn't creep up on a dead tree that way. It would hear you coming." The horrible thing had all his hundred and fifty men there, and in a moment I began to see them, little glimpses of olive-drab pushing through the bushes. I heard his voice again: "By squads from the right!" then corporals' voices, then the rushing of men, then more corporals and more rushing. All the time, from nowhere that I could see, came a continual clicking—the absurd creatures were pretending to fire on the trench where I was standing. I began to get more glimpses of men running stooped and throwing themselves flat, heard the captain's war-horn, and a little further away the lieutenant's voice like a bugle.

For this sort of playing soldier I suppose it was really pretty well done. I knew they were all the time coming nearer, but I couldn't get anything but glimpses of them. And after a while I knew they were behind a line of bushes some fifty yards away, where I heard their continuous clicking; but they showed only an occasional hat. Then I heard the captain's voice, "Front rank, simulate

fix bayonets!" and in a moment, full of sarcasm: "Don't draw that bayonet! I said *simulate*. Don't you understand the English language?" The clicking kept up at only half rate, and I saw a few rifle muzzles; then the rear rank pretended the same; then I heard the order, "Prepare to charge!" And it was all dead silence.

There was nothing that I could do but peep through my loophole, and think how silly it all was. I heard a roar from the captain, an outburst of yells, the crash of the bushes, and—there was the captain coming like a bull, and a long rank of men rising behind him and rolling on toward me in a wave. Oh, Frances dear, there is something awful about brute force! I felt the ground shake, the noise of the shouting seemed to burst my ears, the faces in front of me were like those of angry demons. I'm ashamed that their toy soldiering was so real to them that it [the word *frightened* evidently crossed out] was too much for me, and I turned away and put my hands to my ears.

Then it was all over. I heard them crying "Halt!" and walked out into the open trench, to see a line of men laughing and panting just above me. Only a few saw me at first; the rest were saying "That was some charge!" and similar self-praise. I said, "Will you please help me out?" The men nearest me were very respectful. One leaped down beside me, laid down his gun, and held his hands for me to step in, a blond man, a

real soldier, with flashing blue eyes. Half a dozen hands were held for me above, and the captain came pushing in to help, with such an anxious face! But I heard someone say, "Give me your hand, Vera!" and there was Dick! He and the blond man had me out in a moment, and Dick took me through the line and got me quickly away toward the road I had left. I sent him back, but he would not leave me till he was sure I was all right. He was very handsome, and grave, and respectful. And oh! wasn't it all stupid? I am disgusted with the whole Tenth Training Regiment, but more disgusted with myself.

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EXTRACT FROM PRIVATE GODWIN'S DAILY LETTER, OF THE SAME DATE

. . . The fellows' eyes popped as I took Vera through the line. She *is* a stunner! I saluted the captain when I went back, and he did not ask me to explain why I took so much on myself, though the lieutenant, who came too late, I think was furious with me. We yanked Knudsen out of the trench, and the captain, forming us instantly, marched us away in the direction that Vera didn't take. When he gave us rest she was clean out of sight, and we lay down in the bushes and loafed for a while.

Nobody in the squad asked me a question. Young David's face was a study in ignorance, but of course it was he who let the others know that I was to be let alone. From his squad Randall began to throw remarks at me, but Pickle turned on him very savagely. "Oh, yap, yap, yap!" Captain Kirby when he went by looked at me very intently, and I looked straight back at him. But I couldn't look at any of the other fellows. Curious that a man feels so self-conscious. You women know how to pretend, but few of us seem to manage it.

Yet I wasn't sorry it came about so. The squad stands together on anything that happens to any one of us. I felt proud to belong to it.

When we marched back and had got to the main road again, the captain disappeared; it was the lieutenant who got us to camp and dismissed us there. I knew where the captain went when after this evening's mess I was ordered to go to his tent. He was writing there, and turned round when I *scratched*, which is a little way we have in the army, as there is no way of knocking. I saluted.

"Oh, Mr. Godwin," said he, returning my salute. "Miss Wadsworth sends a message. You're to come to see her this evening, after general conference."

"I was planning to go to company conference, sir," said I.

I suppose she knew I would say that, for he was ready for me. "She made it an order, Mr. Godwin," said he, very gravely.

"Very well, sir," said I, saluted again, and left him writing—or pretending to. I suppose she's got him, like the rest of them.

When I called on Vera we were very proper, and very old-friendly, and radically different in our ideas, as it seems destined for us to be. I told her how much I liked the training, and she said how much she disapproved of it, and so we passed the time. Once she insisted on telling me all about what her sister Frances is doing now. Then officers began to come in, and to chat with the old colonel in the next room, and glance through the door at us, as if saying, "When is

that dam rookie going to go?" So I left. It was nearly time, anyway, for me to be tucked up in bed like a good little boy, and leave the field to my betters.

DICK.

Private Godwin's Daily Letter

Saturday evening, Sept. 16.
At the company tent.

Dear Mother:—

We have just come back from general conference, a nightly occurrence except in bad weather. Tonight, because it was cold, the men went grumbling and tardy, having put on sweaters under their blouses, and the wise ones, on account of the recent rains, bringing something to sit on. In default of anything better a legging will do, slipped off when we are on the ground. Our speaker tonight told us of army law, too technical for me to make it interesting to you. Some speakers have hard work in making their subjects interesting to us, not that these are dull, but that the speakers are. Said Corder to me after one such, "When I was a Sunday School superintendent I let no one speak to the school that hadn't something to say." Yet on the whole I am surprised how well the officers can give us the gist of their subjects.

Our best speaker so far (excepting always the General, who has a way of getting at us that explains his success) was a youngish doctor, who gave us a plain talk concerning personal hygiene. When he spoke of cleanliness, briefly referring to it as a matter of course, I thought of a man whom I had seen on the beach that afternoon, Wednes-

day, looking at his feet and exclaiming in disgust: "Look at them! And I washed them Monday morning!" Some of our lads, who come here with expenses paid by their employers, have a little to learn in this particular.

But to return to our doctor. He was very jocose, expressed himself in perfectly decent men's slang, and kept us laughing *with* him all the time, while at the same time he drove home his advice. And yet it was very striking how once, not disrespectfully, the men laughed *at* him. While speaking of our diet he said, "I advise you to eat freely of the excellent fruit provided at the camp table." Now with us fruit, cooked or raw, is almost lacking, and nothing exasperates me quite so much, when I remember the wonderful apples that were just ripening at home, as to see the small bruised insipid fruit that they serve us here. So the men began to laugh, quietly at first; but the laughter rippled from one end of the crowd to the other, and then rose in waves, and then boomed louder and louder, in one great hearty roar. Whether or not the doctor saw the point, it was worth taking.

Today we went on outpost duty, posting our squads at proper vantage points along the further edge of our old familiar field, beyond the trenches where Vera was trapped. The lieutenant took us out, explaining as he went, dropping a squad on every-other rise of the ground, and leaving its corporal to post his men. Soon we were strung

out along half a mile of rough country, a railroad in our front, and beyond it the enemy's territory. Looking from our vantage-point it was hard to suppose that the barren pasture was hiding all our men. Of them we saw but two, an advance post lying on the hither side of the railroad embankment, peering over the top, and our squad's own foremost man at his place where he could command a railroad cut. The rest were hidden in little hollows, in scattered clumps of pine, or in patches of scrub oak. After a while along came the visiting patrol, directed by each squad onward to the next, and so covering the whole front. And last came the captain, inspecting each post, and when he was satisfied, sending us back with orders to pick up the rest of our platoon and re-form by the trenches. An incident of this short march. Randall, when we routed out Squad Six, produced his last cigarette. His front rank man asked him for half. "No one divides a cigarette," said Randall, borrowed a match from the man, and lighted the cigarette himself. Our Lucy, after watching this in silent amazement, took out his cigarette-box, found he had but one smoke, and handed it over. Really, if he becomes a man Randall should have half of the credit.

This afternoon we have at last made a beginning on another part of our work, the use of the rifle. Some few days ago the captain called for those of us who had used high-powered rifles;

he has since been weeding them out, till he has a couple of dozen of them to use as coaches. To-day we went "on the galleries," which is a convenient phrase for the use of small-bore rifles against small targets at short range. At the bottom of the drill field we hung on wires small wooden frames on which were tacked paper targets; behind was the low railroad embankment, behind that the lake. Our rifles were in every detail like the service pieces, except the smaller bore. We used dummy cartridges as long as the gun usually requires, but so made as to receive much smaller cartridges, carrying weak charges of powder—if you understand the lingo, they were "22 shorts." One gang of us was kept at work perpetually loading these gallery cartridges, and assembling them in clips of five; another gang was steadily tacking new targets on the frames; and bunch by bunch we were moved from these duties to the more interesting one of shooting the cartridges and spoiling the targets.

Since our recent talk in the gymnasium we have been practising, at all odd minutes, how to hold and sight the guns, and how to pull the trigger. Never before coming here had I heard of the *squeeze*, in which (of another kind) all army men are popularly supposed to be proficient by nature, but which here is technically a special study. The greenhorn naturally supposes that all he has to do with the gun is, like Stephen in the classic rhyme, to "p'int de gun, pull on de trigger."

But since the ordinary pull is a jerk that affects the aim, some genius has invented the new method. So we are taught first to grip the small of the stock with the full hand, the thumb along the side, and with the forefinger to take up the slack of the trigger till it engages the mechanism, and then to take a little more, till presently the gun will go off. At this point, while using the sling to secure a good aim, the shooter should squeeze, that is, he should slowly and steadily contract his whole hand, all the fingers together, till in a moment—Bang!

It sounds so easy!

On the galleries, then, we were tested for our understanding of this new art. The size of the target and the distance, considered in relation to the power of the two rifles, were about equal to service conditions at five hundred yards. The weight and size of the gun made the test a fair one. We tried out the two chief postures, sitting and prone, and had both slow and rapid fire, or as the captain prefers to say, slow and deliberate.

These are summaries and general facts. Personal details are: long service in the two gangs, long waits for my turn, and five minutes with the gun. "Be sure to shoot on Number Twelve target," warned the coach as he helped me adjust the sling. "Now get your position right. Now put in the clip. And now remember your squeeze." I was trying slow fire, handling a gun for the first time since I was a boy. "The top of

the U of the open sight an inch below the bull," chanted the coach. "But the bullseye," I complained, "dances all about." "Of course," said the coach. "Make it dance less, hold as steady as you can, squeeze when the front sight is under it.—There, you jerked!" So I did, but I squeezed a little better as time went on, till I was pretty sure I was doing all right. The gun didn't kick, and by my tenth shot I was fairly steady. I gave up the gun after making sure it was empty, waited till all the rest had finished, and at the order we walked forward with new targets, hung them in place of the old, tore ours off the frames, and gave the frames over to the tacking squad, while at the same time trying to compute our scores before we filed up to the captain.

I was amazed and disgusted to find that three of my shots had missed the target quite. To the captain, as he studied my target, I expressed my mortification. "What target were you shooting on?" he asked, in the lingo proper to our trade. I answered "Number Twelve." "Three shots shy," said the captain, "and here's Number Fourteen lacking two hits. Where's Number Thirteen?" "Here, sir," said Bannister, "and there's fifteen shots in my target." "Then three are mine," said I. "And two are mine," said Number Fourteen. My shooting hadn't been very good, threes and fours, with only one bull. Bannister had nine bullseyes, some of which I may have made; but he was privileged to count

all the best shots on his score.—I know now a little more about target shooting than merely holding the gun.

Tomorrow we are to have more of this, although it is Sunday. The captain has given us our evening to ourselves, and has asked us (*asked*, you notice, for our Sunday afternoon is our own) to give him the time tomorrow. He has the reputation, I am told, of always making his company the best at rifle shooting. And if he works us, he is also working himself.

This spell of cold weather which has followed our rains and is going to make life quite different for us, has this evening driven everyone from the company tent except myself, who sit here wrapped in a blanket to my waist, finishing this letter. There has been a very pleasant little group of us here, using each other's ink, interrupting our work to stop and chat, showing each other our photographs. And perhaps I had better explain why it is that I have appeared in two or three of the camp scenes which I have already sent you. There is here an official photographer, who sends out camera men to take us in all sorts of occupations—on the skirmish line, on parade, cleaning our teeth or our rifles, marching, skylarking. The pictures are all of the post-card size, and in due course are exhibited at the studio, where we go and inspect and buy. He is always out of pictures of lieutenants, captains, the general, and other popular subjects. But by perse-

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verance and patient waiting one can accumulate a record of his life here. Luck will put a fellow, on an average, into a few groups a week, as you see in the ones I have sent you.

I am shivering. The captain has promised us another blanket for tomorrow, and there are rumors of an issue of overcoats. At this rate we shall need them.

Love from

DICK.

Private Godwin to His Mother

Sunday evening the 17th.

Dear Mother:—

Not a minute for writing all day, and yet I have been idle, idle, idle. My own personal work began very early, for I got up about quarter of five, took my shower-bath in the shivering dawn, and then, while the camp was just beginning to stir, and when I had the bucket and spigot to myself, I washed out shirt, underclothes, stockings, handkerchiefs, and pajamas. The water was painfully cold, and often I had to stop and warm my hands in my sweater. But I got the work done, and hung the clothes on the lines, knotted together, that are used to regulate the caps on tents 8 and 10. The clothes-pins were most useful, for the wind blew strongly all day, and many a piece of laundry went sailing off to leeward. Inspection compelled me to take the things in once, but I got them out again, and in the evening I had the pleasure of putting on again, dry, the pajamas that I washed in the morning. I never should have been able to fold them properly for stowing away.

Our inspection was very formidable this morning, for the major was expected, and the captain came down the street, and in his mildest voice gave strictest orders. Washing was taken in, extra clothes were taken down from tent-poles,

and tents were made perfectly neat inside and out. I was tent-policeman for the day, but my job was light, for everyone was concerned to have the place look well, and picked up round his cot, borrowed the broom and wielded it, and laid out his kit in the best of order. From the next tent we heard Randall in his usual controversy with his squad, refusing to help his neighbor roll up the walls of the tent, and loudly complaining when his washing and his rubber coat were thrown on his cot with orders to put them out of sight. But in spite of himself he was compelled to share in the housecleaning. Outside, the street was policed of every cigarette-butt and scrap of paper, and then the two police squads, with rakes and brooms, went down the whole length of it and made it as orderly as a garden walk.

Then at command we lined up outside the tents, dressed in two lines down the street, facing each other. Down this aisle came the Major, glancing keenly about, and peering sharply into each tent. Of our corporal he asked if we had blankets enough. Captain Kirby came next with the first sergeant, and carefully inspected each tent. Then he called us all together in a circle, said that the major had been unusually pleased with us; a man of few words, he has seldom praised a company so heartily. This set us all up. Then the captain, for his own part, gave us his thanks, told us we'd done well, and apologized for working us so hard. "I know you hate me like the devil for it," he

said, "but you're coming on finely." And he sent us to the galleries for more practice. We went in some surprise at his opinion of himself. "Hate him like the devil?" exclaimed Corder. "The devil we do!"

The waiting on the drill-field became very tedious. So poor is our equipment that we have but eighteen gallery rifles for our hundred and fifty men, and it was nearly an hour before I got my first try. My score this time was the reverse of yesterday, for I got fifty-four out of a possible fifty, one hundred and eight percent! That was because there were thirteen holes in the paper, someone having presented me with the extra three. Counting all the best shots as my own, my official score was 42; yet none of the shots were outside the second ring, and at worst my score was 39.

In the afternoon my pride had a fall, for after the same tedious wait I fired my ten rounds at the target. This time I fired prone, both clips within two minutes. This position, flat on my belly with my legs apart (in our close quarters it was difficult not to kick my neighbor, and destructive of aim to have him kick me) with my elbows under me and the gun, and my head bent back, is in itself hard enough to maintain during a single shot. But for rapid fire the process is thus. After the first shot the gun is kept at the shoulder, the muzzle slightly lowered and turned aside to give the right hand a chance to work;

I grasp the bolt handle, turn it up, pull it back full length, shove it sharply home, turn it down, and thus have reloaded. Then again I must sight the gun, be sure not to cant it, be sure not to have my eye too close to the cocking piece, must get the sights right, hold steady, and squeeze. All this on a ten seconds' average. After the fifth shot there is a change, for the gun must be taken from the shoulder and the fresh clip inserted. Then five more shots at the same rate. No wonder that, though all these days I have been hardening my elbows and toughening my neck, at the end of my ten shots I fell over gasping.

And my luck was bad. First my clip would not go easily into the gun, and made me feel hurried. Next a cartridge jammed, and lost me ten seconds. Then out of the ten cartridges four missed fire, which put me off my aim. My coach was ready with more, but they had to be loaded singly, and I had time to fire only a total of eight, making a miserable score of sixteen. The captain, after briefly scanning my target, told me that I was aiming too low. After another long wait I had another chance; but this time I was thoroughly chilled by the wind that had been blowing through us all the afternoon. Then the worn cartridges and the old breech mechanism behaved badly again, and though by following the captain's hint I did better, making 27, it was very unsatisfactory. The officers hope for more, and new, gallery rifles. Without them it is difficult to give

us good preliminary practice. For all this, you know, is to get us ready to shoot with the service rifle.

Many of us came shivering off the field, and huddled in our tents with our new extra blankets around us till we warmed up again. But very few of the men failed to turn up at this volunteer practice, and to stay it through on the chance of one more round. In the whole company there were but six who slipped away to pleasures in the town. One of them was Randall.

I am warm now, and fed. Love from

DICK.

Private Godwin's Daily Letter

Monday the 18th September, 5.40 A. M.
On my cot, while the others
sit about and chat.

Dear Mother:—

The reason why the others sit and chat, and why I have time to write, is this. Young David, fresh from his shave (which he has learned to do at speed, and without injury, and is very proud of) came into the tent and said: "We have ten minutes for making up our packs before mess." "Lucy," said Knudsen, "there's a chance of showers. Why do up packs that we may have to undo again?" So David is polishing his shoes (likewise a new art with him) and Pickle is sewing on a button, and they all are talking, while elsewhere, chiefly in the street, the men are making up their packs for the morning's work that is sure to require them. And now comes in Bannister, chanting "Soupy, soupy, soupy!" It is time for mess.

—And now, forty-five minutes later, the whole company is at work over the packs, most of the squads grumbling, but we very happy, for it is showering in a dispirited way, and the order is, "Ponchos out of the packs!" Wise Knudsen, and fortunate Squad 8! Now the next question is, where to carry the ponchos—in the two lower straps of the pack? Everybody gives everybody

else his opinion. The word comes down the street, "Carry them as you please." So mine is looped in the strap that supports my belt, and the pack is slung. And while everyone else is adjusting his pack, or dropping the sides of the tent near his cot, or loosening the tent guy-ropes, I scratch this.—Now the bugle, and the whistle, and the last hasty running and calls, and in a moment we shall be assembled, each with ten blank cartridges in his belt (the first time we have had them) and shall be off in the drizzle.

Evening. In my OVERCOAT!

But it was not many minutes before our ponchos were on, for the day was "open and shut," and sometimes it opened pretty wide. In our full equipment, ponchos over everything, we turned off the main road, went by new and strange ways, and found ourselves for the first time on the range, where we lined up at the 600 yards mark. As we looked toward the butts the scene was very picturesque.

The field was level, rising at the further end to a low ridge, below which stood the targets. These, seen through the drizzle, were but great squares of pale tan color, only slightly relieved against the wet sand bank. In the middle of each of them I could just see a black dot. Between us and them, three hundred yards away, was extended a dark line of men, with here and there a smoking fire around which groups warmed themselves.

From the thin line came irregularly spurts of smoke, and the spattering of rifle shots. It reminded me of an old picture of the field of Antietam, spiritless in itself, but here made alive by the movement, the noise, the drifting smoke, and the gray monotone. I watched it while the captain explained tomorrow's work; then, glad that today had not fallen to our lot, we marched on, taking up our route step in the soft sand of an old railroad bed.

We were glad of our ponchos when the rain increased. As it poured down heavily we were a disreputable lot, all streaked with the wet, our hats slouched, our ponchos bunched in every direction with elbows, packs, and rifles. The rubber turned the cold wind and shed most of the rain; but as before, where our knees touched the ponchos the water came through, and wet us finely. Then the rain stopped and the clouds became thinner, but the wind remained cold; and when the captain slowly led us along the specimen trenches, explaining as he went, we all got pretty well chilled for lack of motion. I looked at David and saw that he was turning blue. The only mental relief came when we arrived at the shelter where a few days ago we found Vera.

Corder looked at the sign in front of it, and read it out. "Machine gun emplacement! Very appropriate!"

I couldn't help smiling, nor could the rest, except David, who for politeness tried to be

blank, and thoroughly warmed himself by the inward struggle, turning quite red. When the captain got us back to the road and "fell us out" (note the idiom!) we had calisthenics, with pushing matches that put warmth into us. And then we marched in skirmish line through low bushes for half a mile, till the captain lined us up for blank cartridge practice.

We had struck another part of the same abandoned railroad, from which was plainly visible, at perhaps two hundred yards, the gable of a deserted shack. The captain sent to it a couple of men, who tacked up a target on it. Then first the coaches, our experienced riflemen, and after them the platoons one by one, came forward, every man being ready with his two clips of blank cartridges. The slings were adjusted, each line as it came up loaded with the first clip, and at the command "Targets—up!" threw itself flat, took position, and began to fire. The lieutenant called out the ten second intervals. Proper firing would bring the exhaustion of the first clip at about one minute. Then the second clip would be inserted, and should be finished with the second minute.

I cautioned my coach to remind me to keep my eye away from the cocking piece, and after testing sling and ground, threw myself down and got into position at the word. Well, it wasn't difficult to fire; though the noise of the gun was much greater than that of the gallery rifle there was no recoil; and I tried to be as steady as possible in

aiming and squeezing. The bullseye was the silhouette, life size, of a man lying prone and firing at me. Instructions were to aim at the bottom of the target, about a foot below him. The crack of my neighbor's piece, very loud and sharp, was the most uncomfortable part of the performance, and I shall shoot tomorrow with cotton in my ears; many decided likewise. I plugged away steadily, the ammunition worked well, and I finished my second clip with about fifteen seconds to spare. Then I stood up and brushed myself, with no one to prove that I had not made a perfect score.

One hundred and fifty men shooting ten rounds each—that meant 1500 shells left on the ground, with 300 clips, all of brass. I noticed some rather untidy figures, emerging from the miserable little shacks that dotted the scrub, slinking through the brush in our direction and gathering on the flanks of our firing line, eight or ten men and boys and girls, one of the latter carrying a baby. Near me Captain Kirby cursed them under his breath as "human buzzards," and I understood that these camp followers had not gathered merely to admire. As soon as the last platoon filed off the ground, these persons slipped forward, and began eagerly to pick up the treasure that lay scattered there. With brass at twenty-five cents a pound, war prices, they made enough, scratching in the dirt, to keep them going for the next week or so.

Back to camp then, still glad of our ponchos,

for though there was no more rain the wind was steadily colder. Then the job of cleaning, with one rod per squad, and patches always few, our fouled rifles.

This afternoon we were taken to a neighboring field, where in limited area are samples of most of the military engineering devices approved by moderns. Three officers of the engineers in turn took charge of us, and showed us bridges, roads, entanglements, dugouts, rifle pits, hand grenades, trench mortars (with real bombs!) and finally the mysteries of map-making, which for me are practical mysteries still. Some glimmer of an idea I now have of how a man with a watch and compass, a sketching board and paper, can make a working map of country entirely new to him; but I never could do it myself. Calisthenics next, as almost daily; and then instead of being dismissed for our swim, which none of us wanted in such cold, we were marched back to the company street, where a line soon formed at the store tent, and a magic word was passed from squad to squad.

Overcoats! Overcoats? Could we believe it? But a figure separated itself from the crowd at the head of the street, and came strutting toward us. An army overcoat, o. d., and above it the grinning features of a fellow whom we knew well. It was true! And quickly we ourselves got into line, coming at last to the tent, where without considering sizes the overcoats were handed out just as they came. After which men went up and

down the street swapping, the little fellows with 44s calling out for 36s, and the big fellows demanding 44s. I soon exchanged my 38 for a 42, and now, at the camp tent, am comfortably writing in it. It holds me sweater and all, blouse too if necessary; it can cover the ears and comes well below the knees. Mysteriously—for I don't understand these things—it has the military cut. I never felt so swell as when I first buttoned it on.

There has been no general conference on account of the cold, our captain being the only one brisk enough to get overcoats for his men. But company conference is now due, and I see the captain coming. These nights on the rifle, always the rifle.

Love from

DICK.

Private Godwin's Daily Letter

Plattsburg, Tues. the 19th September.

Dear Mother:—

We have had a long day on the rifle range, slow fire at three hundred, five hundred, and six hundred yards, working for a total of 50 on each target, and a possible grand total of 250 when, some other day, we have our two tries at rapid fire. The work was hard for some of us, the coaches and scorers, exciting for the rest. The captain worked hard from first to last, trying to make it possible for us, with our slight preparation, to qualify as marksmen, with a total of 160, or perhaps even to do better, as sharpshooters scoring 190, or as expert riflemen with 210 points. Our new overcoats, for which we have him to thank, saved the lives of many of us, for there was the keenest little north wind blowing. I lay down in mine once, and slept very comfortably; and all the fellows were grateful for the protection. There isn't a man in the company that hasn't done his best today for the captain's sake, if not for his own.

Our company were waked a little early, and were extra prompt to breakfast, which was extra good (eggs and bacon!)—again the captain's foresight. He started us promptly for the range, surely the oddest sight that we have presented so

. . . . . except in our grea
carrying ponchos, and except
belts, no other equipment. I
laxed today, for the captain,
scores, was as gentle as a lamb.

Of the three dozen targets w
our share, and companies I an
mainder. In front of our sectio
company flag was set up, the ben
the scorers took their seats, th
ranged for their turns. Compan
marching on, and before very
rapidly getting used to the orderl
range. The coaches were calle
opening try, and suddenly I hea
the first round to begin. The sh
out, sharp and heavy.

Behind each set of three target
stationed. The men stood and
and waited, or lay and tried the
derlies, sergeants, and platoon com
to and fro. Loretta came to our
"Don't stand . . . . . "

must waste no time." "Ammunition here at No. 27." "Every man ready with his score card and his score book." In but a few minutes the firing, which at the first was so noticeable, became a commonplace, yet it was worth listening to. From along the line came scattered reports, like the blows of a heavy rod on very heavy carpet, now slowly separate, now close together, now sharply double. In answer the whip-like echoes slashed out from the woods. The drab men stood, or sauntered, or hurried; the figures of the shooters lay prone, each with an eager coach crouching over him, correcting his position, urging steadiness, repeating "Squeeze! Squeeze!" Behind the line sat scorers at their wooden stands, behind them the first sergeant received the records. The company flags, marking the line beyond which the waiting men might not advance, flapped steadily in the breeze.

And in front of all, three hundred yards away, stood up the gray sandbank, the stopper of the bullets. Some shots went over, to land in the distant woods beyond, whose encircling signs warn all wanderers to keep out. "There are hornets in those woods today, gentlemen," said the captain yesterday as we passed beyond the range. "We will keep away." There are thirty-six blackboards numbered in order, and between them are the great targets of manila paper, with their circles and the heavy spot at the centre. As a man shoots his target sinks, its mate im-

mediately rises in the same spot, and then upon its face appears, moved by the markers concealed in the pit below, the record of the shot. A red flag slowly waved—a miss!—a black cross on a white circle, a red disk, or best of all, a white disk that obliterates "the bull." The scorers interpret. "A four at three o'clock," "a three at nine o'clock," "a clean five, high up," "a nipper four at twelve o'clock," and with a little chuckle, "a ricochet five!"

Over it all, behind the butts, against the low clouds, rose a silent blue hill, one of the distant Adirondacks.

In spite of our new greatcoats it grew chilly waiting. I took my time, wrote notes of this for you, listened, watched. At last I was called to the bench among those whose turn was next. There at the smoking lamp I blackened my sights, and then carefully laying the gun on the rack I sat down, still in my greatcoat, and while others fidgeted with impatience, or shivered in their sweaters, I remembered that after all I was only a civilian, and remained calm.

My name being called at last, I went forward to the little rise where, beside a white stake, I was to shoot. I adjusted my sling and lay down to the left of the stake; to the right was Lucy, tense and pale. My coach was a stranger; his was good Clay. My coach tried in vain to get me to take the position he preferred; it hurt and strained me, and he gave up. As I slowly got the position I

was used to, working my elbows into the sand, bracing my toes, keeping my body close to the ground, my left hand twisted in the sling and supporting the barrel, my right at the trigger and stock, and my cheek at the butt, to my left a rifle heavily spoke, and in spite of cotton my ear rang. Then Lucy shot. I heard the scorer say, "Mr. Farnham, a miss!" and I chuckled as I prepared to shoot.

My coach knelt over me and repeated "Squeeze!" I got the sights in line, the bull in place above the front sight, which was—or should have been—on a line with the top of the U of the open sight, for I was afraid of the peep sight. "Are you shooting on twenty-eight?" asked the coach. I verified the number of my target, then tried to hold the wavering muzzle steady, and for the first time tightened my hand-grip on the trigger of a rifle capable of killing at two miles. It jumped sharply in my hands, I saw the red flame at the muzzle as I heard the report, and felt myself kicked smartly in the shoulder. Then, spent with all this tension, I relaxed my grip and collapsed on my face.

There was a discouraging pause as I lay, waiting to hear the hit announced. Then the scorer cried "Mark Twenty-eight!" The man at the field telephone repeated the order. I knew the fact—at the butts the marker had not heard over his head the ripping crack of the bullet, and had to be told that I had fired. I imagined the slow

waving of the red flag. Then I heard the scorer briefly announce, "Mr. Godwin, miss!"

Well, I shot two more shots, both on the target, but both poor. My coach did not seem able to help me. Then Clay, who in spite of his work with Lucy had kept an eye on me, spoke in a low voice to my coach, who rose and departed. In a moment the captain came, a great relief to me, depressed with such failure. He looked at my score, asked a couple of questions as to my sight and aim, took the gun and adjusted the sights, and stayed to coach me himself.

But this was not Captain Kirby of the drill field, abrupt and peremptory. He knelt beside me, coaxed, encouraged, purred. "Now, Mr. Godwin, this time you will do better." And actually I did, a four at seven o'clock. Once more he adjusted the sights and gave advice as to aim. "And squeeze!" he said. "Squeeze!" I made a five at six o'clock—only a nipper, but still a bull! Someone else coming for him, he left me with a "See, you're shooting better!" And I believed him.

That is what he was doing all day, correcting, advising, giving confidence. Every man after shooting brought his score-book to him, and was told how to improve his work. But it was too late for me to make a good score on this target: I made but twenty-two. Yet other men did worse, nine, eleven, and even four! Corder, disgusted, reported a twenty. Knudsen was quietly pleased

with his thirty-nine. Then I hunted up David, and found him just as Randall approached with a "Lucy, what did you make?" David acknowledged a twenty-one, and Randall gloated over his own forty-two. When he had gone, I said "He ought to shoot, being pure animal. He has no nerves."

"Hasn't he?" demanded David, meaning, "I know he has." But he would say no more.

I found that the men with low scores were more troubled about the effect on the company total, and the captain's record, than they were for their own credit.

But as for this game of shooting, it is certainly a test of nerve. Nothing else can quite equal it —the strain to get position, to line the sights just right, to hold steady, and then to squeeze. By me on the firing-line the irregular shots were loud and startling, and people were talking and calling all around. Golf, with its reverence for the man about to play, is mild compared to this. The nervous strain of firing is greater, the bodily shock is abrupt and jarring, you have no real chance to make up for a miss by later brilliance or by any luck. No, golf teaches patience and it requires poise, but—as played by the ordinary man—it is no such game as this.

And as between the experts, target shooting is still the bigger sport. The knowledge and judgment required to meet the varying conditions, the steadiness demanded, the fact that the rifleman

is preparing himself to meet his country's greatest emergencies—these put golf (and you know I have loved the game) into the lower place.

I put on my greatcoat again, took the nap that longed to be taken, and then, refreshed and more confident, went to my next turn.

This was at five hundred yards. If you will consider that I was shooting from our house across the meadow, across the railroad bridge, at a circle twenty inches in diameter (about the size of our largest pewter platter) you will understand my task. But I was fussed to begin with, for someone had taken my rifle from the rack, and I had therefore not blacked the sights, nor adjusted the sling, of the one that I hastily borrowed. As I came to the stand I was met by an artillery corporal, evidently a kind of super-coach, who curtly ordered me to do the one thing and the other, and hurried me to my place. I told him how the captain had wanted the sights set for this distance; I had put them so. "That doesn't go here," he said, readjusted them himself, and ordered me to lie down. He was so overbearing, and I was so uncertain of my rights, that I took my position and fired my shot. A miss! He blamed me severely, and in general treated me like the dirt under my feet. At my next shot, a poor two, he said, "There you go, thinking you know all about it, and jerking your trigger again." I said, "On the contrary, I'm not used to the pull of this trigger, and the gun went off before

I expected." From that time on I paid no more attention to him, and perhaps from my manner he saw that it was just as well to let me alone; but he attacked the other man on this target, who feebly protested, and who made a wretched score. My score was coaxed along by our company coach, a nice chap named Haynes, who was most interested and sympathetic. As for me, the artilleryman vexed me so that I shot to kill *him*, and by imagining him at the target made a thirty-six.

It was an entirely new sensation, to be so bedevilled by such a man, and to know that in wartime I could not reply. When at noon we were marched back to camp and dismissed I sought out Haynes and asked, "What is your opinion of that artillery coach?" Said he, "I'm going to speak to the captain about him." "Thanks," I said. "You'll save me the trouble." And when again I came back to the post in the afternoon, though the corporal was there, he was very quiet and good.

This incident makes me doubt the value, for such volunteers as we, of the regular non-coms whom they hope to have here next year, if by that time the troops are off the border. What help could such an overbearing conceited drill-master, with no inkling of our difficulties or our point of view, give to such a squad as ours? Would he last a week out of hospital, or we a week out of arrest? No, give us a Plattsburg

veteran of one camp as corporal, and appoint as sergeants those who have served two, and we shall come on faster. Further, more men would thus be trained for responsible positions.

In the afternoon we shot at 600 yards. We now had sandbag rests for our left hands (not for our guns) and once more the captain showed his foresight. He had us bring intrenching shovels and a dozen new burlap bags, and soon we were provided with the best sandbags on the range. I had the same nice little Haynes who had coached me on my second target. Unsatisfied as I still am with my showing, I think he drilled into me some idea of my errors, and my score again improved, standing at forty. I feel better than if it had wavered up and down, even if the total had been the same, and can reasonably argue that if the captain kept on increasing the distance, say to 2000 yards, I should make a perfect score. But many men, I find, did their worst at this distance, Randall ending up at 24. Lucy has pegged steadily along, and got into the thirties.

The supper-tables buzzed tonight as never before, every man having his tale to tell, generally a tale of woe. Poor Knudsen is very sore, as his last shot went into his neighbor's bullseye, and though the neighbor had finished shooting, the shot could not be credited to Knudsen. There are many other stories of misses that spoiled the score, and on the other hand when a man has made a ricochet hit he is not inclined to brag of

it. Even those who from my point of view did very well are a little inclined to grumble; and the only really satisfied man is Percy of Squad Nine, who holds today's record.

Concerning Knudsen's miss, I now have the whole story. He had as scorer an artillery sergeant who read the flags through field-glasses, and was an unusually long time in scoring the last shot. At last he said "A bull," and scored a five, which gave Knudsen a perfect record; but he, suspecting something, made the man admit that the bulleye was in the wrong target. Knudsen changed the score himself, a bit of personal heroism that roused the wonder of Pickle, who told me the tale, and ended "Chee, I couldn't a done it!"

Here is a story of Lieutenant Pendleton, told me by a man who watched the incident. Our top-sergeant was scoring badly at six hundred yards, and the lieutenant said, "Let me try your gun." So he lay down, and without putting his arm in the sling, rested the gun on the bag, drew it tightly into the shoulder by a hand-grip of the strap, and fired. It was a "two at one o'clock," which means that the shot struck the outer side of the target about the line, on a clock face, between one o'clock and the centre. "Your sight is too high," said he, and corrected it. Then he tried again, and got a "three at three o'clock," which means that he struck on the level of the bull, but still out at the right. "You must cor-

rect for windage," said he then. "I'll give her one and a quarter." So once more, with the same rest and grip, he fired. Before the targets could be changed and the shot marked the lieutenant got up, gave the gun to the sergeant, and walked away, saying, "That's a bull's eye. You can depend on that sighting, sergeant." Then the scorer called the shot. A bull's eye it was, and the sergeant went on to shoot a string of them.

There is some pleasure in being drilled by such men as our officers. I wish you could see the lieutenant on parade, in his best clothes, which somehow are more becoming to him than the undress uniform, in which Kirby shows best. Watch Pendleton walking with his springy, tireless step, always with his eye on us. A dandy he is then, but one of the fighting dandies, an athlete in good training, and a man that knows his business.

Our day was so completely taken up by the shooting that at the end it was too late even for Retreat, and we in the middle of our washing up watched the other battalion at parade, stood at attention while the band played the Star-Spangled Banner, and saluted at the end. I have spent much of the evening writing; and now, the first call having blown, the camp is getting ready for bed. In the inner company tent I am left alone, the other letter-writers and diarists having drifted away. In the outer, open tent, where the conferences are held, three men are sitting at a corner of the big table, still discussing their scores, their

rifles, the squeeze, the kick, the serious mistake it is to cant the gun. And here is a fact for you. Captain Kirby declares that the rifles do not kick, and in his own case he is probably right. But I got today a very sharp recoil each time I fired, so that by noon my arm was lame to the elbow, and my shoulder sore. I expected much difficulty in the afternoon, and the first shot hurt consumedly; but whether or not I learned to hold the rifle better, or whether the gradual toning up of my muscles is accustoming me to what comes, the rest of the kicks seemed to act as a sort of massage, so that I forgot about them, and tonight I am entirely free of lameness.

Outside, at the head of the company street, the fire is gradually dying down. Wood is always provided for it, a hole is dug, the men feed it as long as they please, and in the morning the police squad, I suppose, smooth the ground. On benches or on the ground the men sit about the fire, sing, discuss, or chat in groups. There is in the store tent an easy chair made of rough lumber and sacking; when the captain can be induced to stay after conference the men bring it out, seat him in it, and make him talk. On his own doings he is silent, but on the work of the camp, the formations, drill, skirmish work, patrolling, outpost duty, and especially just now the ways of his beloved tool, the rifle, he has much to say. Around him are men often much older than he, others who in civil life command several times his pay, fel-

lows who have every luxury at command, as well as chaps bred and indeed wedded to the most peaceable pursuits. But they all are here for a purpose; they never talk patriotism but they all act it; and everything he can tell them that bears on their efficiency as soldiers they will pump from him if they possibly can. It is fine to see how they recognize in him complete mastery of the subject that occupies us all, and how they sit at his feet for instruction.

But he has left us nearly half an hour ago, and the groups that remain are slowly separating, as one by one the men go to their tents. I can tell you just what is happening in ours. The lantern is lighted and hanging on the pole. Clay is probably finishing a letter to his "mother." Bannister is doubtless already abed, but ready from his cot to add a sleepy jest to the quiet talk that is slowly going on. Reardon is putting the last stamps on the sheaf of post-cards that he daily sends, for he, you must understand, has more correspondents at home than any of the rest of us. Rather big and burly, the quietest of men, with a very active eye but very intensely committed to the minding of his own business, I know him to be the most popular man in his own little town, where as the managing clerk of the grocery he knows every man, woman, and child in the place. He knows the taste of each, what he habitually needs or demands, whether to trust or require cash. He gets through his day without a

clash with anyone. And knowing both his customers and the market he looks after the needs of the town, warns of a rise in prices, calls attention to special bargains, advises to lay in a stock of this or that. They miss him now that he's gone; I know it by the pleasure he takes in the letters and post-cards that come daily, bits from which he cannot help reading out to us—from the Civil War veteran who half believes in Plattsburg, and half doesn't; the drug-store clerk that has to go off on his vacation alone; the "boss" that has nothing personal to say, but quotes the market changes; the neighbor who doesn't quite venture to trust to the post the doughnuts she wishes she might send. And nightly Reardon sits on his cot and writes in the dim light careful answers to every message.

Lucy and Corder are putting themselves to bed most systematically, Corder because of his middle-aged habit, Lucy on account of that aristocratic cleanliness in which he has been scrupulously bred. They have their system and their order, the toilet, the costume, the making of the bed, all very careful and precise. Knudsen, still dressed, is lolling on his cot and jollying; this is the time of day when he most comes out of himself, and I know that presently when I approach the tent it will be his ringing tenor that I shall hear. He is poking fun at the others, cursing that last shot on the range, interrupting Reardon and Clay in their writing, philosophizing on his favorite sub-

ject, baseball. Yet if you get a little closer to him you find that he has interests that it takes a little coaxing to disclose: religious convictions that he has changed with his growth, curious hard business experiences that make him declare that he is a self-seeker, while you have only to watch him with Lucy to know that he is not. Yet he sedulously knocks and batters at every feminine quality that the boy discloses, and will exaggerate any statement if he thinks you suspect him of tenderness.

I shall presently make a dash for the tent, snatch my tooth-brush and make for the spigot, and bring back a basin of water for my feet. Then Knudsen will bestir himself and race me for bed, at the same time that Reardon lays by his pen and accepts our warning. We crawl between the blankets, nine over us tonight. I shall put my poncho over me next, and my overcoat on that, and with the tent-wall looped up shall be practically outdoors.

Last of all Pickle will come slipping in from some rendezvous with friends. He sleeps in his clothes, minus shoes and leggings, and he is likely to be curled up before I am.

And then float to us the notes of Taps. "Love, good night. Must thou go . . .?" It is the signal. The last one of us puts out the lantern, and it is soon "Good night, boys," and silence. Usually I go to sleep at once; if not I soon hear the feet of two of the sergeants in the street and see the gleam

of their lantern. They come from tent to tent, enter ours and throw the light on each cot, and pass on. Often I hear from the neighboring tents a sleepy "Good night, sergeant," but never yet the question "Who sleeps in that cot?" A high average, then, of obedience to the rules. The men are here for business.

I have lingered almost too long. Good night!

DICK.

The Same to the Same

Plattsburg, 20th Sept., 1916.

Dear Mother:—

It promises today, Wednesday, to be showery once more, so we are making up our packs with the ponchos out, ready for use. Post-mortems of yesterday's scores are still going on. The boys are all well and lively, except that I have just passed Randall standing gloomy at the door of his tent, feeling very much insulted because someone at breakfast called him a grabber. Apart from him the street is humming with talk, as the boys make up their packs upon the hard-trodden sand.

It is a very amusing thing, this confusion and talk of the street, as men on errands make their way among the kneeling figures, the police squad tries to do its work, the sergeants pass, and jokes or criticism are bandied about. We are becoming very well acquainted, except for those who have not the habit of noticing their neighbors. There are a couple of men who have for ten days sat opposite me at table, and yet do not know me when we meet outside. But most of the men are very companionable. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that the opportunity has not been very great. Unless a man is Number One or Number Four in his squad, he is likely to be swallowed up by it. I have felt very fortunate to be Number

One, for in all formations in line I stand beside a man of another squad, and whenever we fall in or stand at rest I chat with them. Since Bannister has neglected the advice, given by the captain, to shift the men about, I am glad that I have had this advantage, and am more lucky in getting a wider acquaintance than is possible to some of the others. For as you have seen, we eat together, march together, dress and sleep together, the squad being the unit on which everything is based. Captain Kirby has said that when we rest on the hike squads must sit down together, so as to waste no time in falling in.

But the shooting has done a great deal to break down this isolation. It was impossible, on the range or the gallery, to keep the squads together, whether in shooting or in waiting. The men compared their scores, explained their mistakes, gave advice, and fished for sympathy, with everyone they met. Men in squads widely separated in the line got quite chummy over their misfortunes, and grew friendly in encouraging each other. The scorers and especially the coaches met many new men. So at the table and the campfire the talk is now much more personal, and I think that from this time on the company will be more of a unit in feeling, if not more in unison in drill.

On this last point Captain Kirby is certainly unanimous. The shooting, with its necessary disorder, has got us out of our habits of snap,

and today we have been put through a course of sprouts that has taken away any conceit that we might have had. This morning he gave us ten rounds of blank cartridges and took us out into our usual ground, the Peru road and the fields adjoining. First, in anticipation of tomorrow, by platoons we were given rapid-fire practice, sitting and firing our ten shots at a count of ninety seconds. To our delight, it being a little windy, the big paper target had to be held by a couple of the sergeants, one of them being Loretta, at whom most of us aimed. (Some day I shall find time to tell you about him.) This practice was valuable to me, helping me with my squeeze. It was amusing to watch the other men fire (cool and clever, or nervous and clumsy) and to listen to a little echo close behind our backs as we waited, like a bunch of firecrackers going off all by itself.

And an incident. Before leaving the ground I gathered up ten shells and some clips, to practice with at camp. After Recall I went to the end of the company street, made up my clips, and had nearly finished simulating the shooting of the second one, when we were called for calisthenics, and I came running, and put away the gun. When later we fell in for parade, and were given "Inspection arms!" on my opening my rifle a shell flew out, right at the feet of the first sergeant, much to my disgust. When later still I came back and found it, I discovered it to be not

an "empty" but a "blank," which someone this morning must excitedly have pumped out of his gun unfired, and left lying for me to pick up. Lucky I didn't fire it in practising at the foot of the street!

But it shows that I am still a greenhorn if I will put away my gun with anything in it, even though I had supposed it to contain but an empty shell. I don't intend ever to do such a thing again. There is another trifling mistake we are liable to, as illustrated today. Halted at "company front," that is, with the two ranks in long lines, the captain ordered us to load. At the command the men half turn to the right, but keep the rifle pointing forward and up; the rear rank men also come close to the front, so that the muzzles of their guns are in advance of the front rank men. Standing thus they open the breeches of their guns, thrust in the clips, shove the bolt handle forward and turn it down—and then somebody's gun goes off! So you see why the rear rank men have their guns where no one will be hit, and why the captain stands off at one side. My, but he read us a lecture this morning! "Who let off that gun?—Mr. Soandso, some blunders are crimes. That was one!" And a few more well chosen words. One hundred and forty-nine of us were glad we hadn't made that little slip.

After our firing the captain broke the company into two, and took my half himself. Then he proved to us that in skirmish drill we had for-

gotten all we had ever known, briefly expressed his opinion of the corporals, and splitting us into squads, told the sub-squad-leaders to take command. Now Reardon, who has drilled at Number Four in the rear rank since the formation of the squad, is by virtue of that position the corporal's substitute, and he manfully tried to lead us. I saw in a moment, first that he knew twice as much as I about the drill regulations, second that never before having given an order, he could not do himself justice. Further, with the captain in that mood every man of us was scared. So presently the captain, after a few beheadings in other squads, came and watched ours for a minute, sent Reardon to his place in the ranks, and as his eye roved over the rest of us, picked me out, probably as being the only one whose name he knew. "Mr. Godwin, put the squad through the skirmish drill!" A bad five minutes! I can order men about *informally*, and I knew what I wanted done in this case, but to give the order in the precise words of the drill book was more than my memory could compass. It was very interesting, even quite exciting; continually I racked my brain for something to do next in which I should not make a fool of myself. We got back into company formation after a while, and the captain tried the line in a skirmish advance; then abruptly he put all the corporals back into their places, and my little reign was over.

I should like, as anyone would like, to be cor-

poral. Yet I should not make a good one, being nowadays in an absent-minded state and likely to fall into fits of brooding from which I could not give my orders correctly or promptly. I wonder if the captain will find out Knudsen. But it is right that Bannister should remain corporal, for he is daily improving in the work.

Nor can it be at all easy for our two officers to find, in the midst of all their work and among so many men, the one man in every eight capable of leading the squad. In the early stage of the school of the soldier it was not difficult to find those men who could best handle their guns and drill others in the same simple art. But such a test, even if mentally sufficient, does not take in the moral qualities necessary for the handling of eight men, keeping them up to discipline, seeing that they understand and are at all times ready for their work. Experienced sergeants might make this quickly possible, but our sergeants, even when they have been here before, are mostly very new to their duties. I take it that the captain and lieutenant are doing as well as they can.

In the afternoon the captain formed us in the street and drilled us in the manual, then took us down on the field and explained battalion parade, after which he put us through and through and through its simple evolutions, we blundering all the time. We had merely to march in line, to march in column, to halt and bring our rifles

down together, and to do the customary movements of the manual in unison. But try as we might, we couldn't please the captain. For my part, I was as scared as a schoolboy, fearing to make some slip. But such little ones as I know I made passed unnoticed; in fact, our part of the line attracts very little of his attention, so I conclude we do fairly well. Yet in the picture which I send, of the captain looking at our squad as we march company front, the camera has caught Squad 8 in a great mistake. The sun, as it lies exactly along the line of the company, with only the right hands and knees in full light, shows my part of the line pushed wholly forward out of the shadow, and the Captain looking at us in disgust. His attitude shows his fighting quality. "The scrappiest captain in the army," says Knudsen. So often he has to look back thus and warn us: "Steady!" or "Guide!" or "Hold back on the left!"

How little you as a spectator would get of what goes on in the ranks on such an occasion as today's final parade! Suppose you were where I so often wish you, at the top of the slope above the field, which in spite of certain unevennesses would look to you fairly level. You would see the band march down and take its place in the left corner; then away to your right the companies would appear in their separate columns, and perhaps you would think they were very interesting as they halted and waited. Then when the major came

and took his stand below you, the music would strike up, and the three companies would march straight onto the field, along the bottom of which they would one after another swing into line and stand in apparently beautiful order. Then an adjutant with a clear high voice would give orders, and the men would present arms, come to attention, and then to parade rest. In this position they would remain while the band, playing a march, would go down the whole line and back again, the music, when they were once more in place, abruptly stopping. Then the officers would gather and march forward in line, they would return, the major would call a command, and the companies would all break into squads, the rifles coming to the shoulders. To the right they would pass, turn up the slope, and then one by one would again swing into line and pass, with more or less beautifully wavering fronts, before the major. The first two companies would evoke applause from the spectators; the third, in which you would see a familiar face, would rouse none—and though you might clap your best, in this case you are but a ghost, and no one would hear you. Then the companies would for last time break into squads and so would march off the field. And you would sigh and think, "Isn't it fine?"

Well, you would never get the true inwardness unless I told you. It went this way.

Down out of the street we marched into the field, I a small part of a big machine, very much

afraid that I might make some blunder. The men's feet thudded in unison on the sod, and to each tramp came the rustling echo of our stiff breeches, always an accompaniment to us as we march in good order. We waited, we marched forward to the music, we heard the captain give his first order—to the guides, I realized, not to us—but then came "Squads left—march!"

I swung to the left, the men in front of me marched to the right. Just grazing the last of them, as these rear-rank men filed to their places, I stepped into my position in the front rank just as the corporal finished counting "Six" below his breath, and at "Seven!" the whole line, which had been waiting for us Number Ones to complete it, strode straight forward. "Company—!" and we took this last moment, each out of the corner of his eye searching to the right, to get in good line. "Halt!" Low voices counted "One, two!" and the halt was completed. "One, two, three!" and the pieces were at the order. The captain commanded "Right—dress!" and we edged forward, our heads turned to the right, to align the rank.

Such eager work we make of it—"Forward on the right—back in the next squad—Frothingham, you're too far forward—tell Neary to get back!" Such commands, all under the breath, run up and down the line. At last we are in place, the Captain says "Front!" and takes his place before the middle of the line, facing away from

us. But he says in reminder, "The next command for *you* will be Parade Rest."

Alas, Lieutenant Pendleton's high tenor (he is the adjutant for the day) calls "Guides—posts!" We knew—we ought to have known—the order; we had been warned to ignore it. But some of the men come to parade rest. The captain hears, though he cannot turn to look. "Stupid!" he hisses. "As you were!" Then comes the command for us all, "Parade—rest!"

It was very comfortable, waiting while the band marched up and down. We were not much stirred by this; we knew by heart all the few tunes; we thought the drum-major very tiresome with his bent head and his elbow jogging for the time. But there was, above the ugly mess-shacks straight in front, the finest sunset to look at: angry clouds to the right, to the left wide reaches of pure blue, with tiny white clouds stretching in rank to infinite distance, and in the middle the yellow glow of fire behind broken masses, through which shot, not beams of light, but rather, it seemed, wide bars of shadow.

The captain, as we thus stood at parade, hissed back over his shoulder, "Bad! Some of you men have your feet too far back." This would particularly disgust him, for at previous practice, taking a gun from a sergeant, he stood in front of us and said, "Let me show you how Rip Van Winkle here in the second squad comes to parade rest," and gave us a ludicrous example of slowness

and slovenliness. Then he illustrated, in briskness and correct position, just how we should do it.

Returned to his place after saluting the major, he said, looking straight in front, "Your next command is Squads Right." The major's big voice boomed: "Pass in review—squads right—March!" I turned sharply to my right, marked time, and when the other three had come into line, together we stepped out. The band blared out, we were in step, and so approached the corner. "Column left!" and we did our best to turn correctly, though nobody could see. Then we marched up the slope, knowing that the real test was now coming. "Squads left!" and as the rear rank man made way for me, I stepped into place, and in one line we all strode out together. To hold the line straight! You on the top of the slope may have cried "How pretty!" at the rifles all with the same slant, the hands at the same height, the heads straight front, the feet—one, two! one, two!—in perfect time with the music. But with us in the line there was intentness to remedy any unevenness, strain to hold ourselves just right. We could not look except out of the corners of the eyes; all was done by the touch of the elbows. For a few yards, rods, it was good. We safely crossed a slimy patch where a great puddle had just dried, through which on Monday I tramped ankle deep, and where now a fall would be natural. Then—ah! we expected this! Froth-

ingham, I, Knudsen, found ourselves marching alone, the other men out of touch with us, having drawn away to the right and left. I heard my mates grumble, I knew what I was to do: spread myself to occupy all possible space and march straight onward, for—there! they were back again, surging from the left and right, back in their proper places, and the line had not really broken. "Good!" murmurs Knudsen. "Hold it!" exhorts the captain over his shoulder. Then "Eyes right!" and thus saluting as we passed the major we could see, or thought we saw, a perfect line. "Front!" We swept on; we listened. The ladies had clapped the first two companies, but there was no applause for us. Had it then been bad after all?

Back to the street we marched, and formed in line. Lieutenant Pendleton came and spoke to the captain, then walked away smiling. "The lieutenant says you did well," said the captain briefly. But he was so short that we thought him grumpy, especially since the lieutenant had never before been seen to give us anything else than his little ironical smile. Yet at company conference, in the evening, one of us ventured to ask the captain if we really had done badly. "No," said he. "I was pleased with you. You did well. The major said you did best." So the lack of applause meant nothing. I saw men whose home affairs are so large that this might properly be small to them, look at each other in relief.

To day I got a letter from Walt Farnham about his cousin Lucy. He says: "I know you won't baby him. The camp ought to do him good. It was I that put the idea into his head, but his father, afraid that he might back out at the last minute, or not stick it through, has promised him an auto of his own when he gets back, anything up to twelve thousand dollars. How can even Plattsburg save such a boy?"

And Vera is after him now. After conference I was writing in the company tent, the inner one, while the captain still talked outside to half a dozen men. To my surprise a bell rang behind me, and while I sat looking at a curious instrument on the post, wondering if it were a telephone, the captain came in, took from it a strange receiver-transmitter, and spoke into it. I heard Vera plainly answering, and the captain, saying "Mr. Godwin is right here," gave me the thing to hold. She said "Oh, Dick!" so plainly that of course the captain heard it as he went out again. Vera told me that Mrs. Farnham has written her, asking her to keep an eye on her darling, and I was to send Lucy to call. I warned her she'd much better leave him alone, but she laughed and insisted. The telephone was in that state, or she spoke so plainly (you know how it occasionally happens) that anyone could have heard her even in the outer tent. When I hung up and went out, there was the captain just saying good night to the men, and the table and benches would

not let me slip by before he turned and saw me.

You know there are moments when eyes meet and seem to catch, and it is difficult to pass without speaking. That is why, I am sure, the captain said: "You are very well acquainted with Miss Wadsworth?"

I thought that here was a chance for the truth. "I ought to be," I said. "I have been engaged to her for the past two years." And then seeing, by the instant change in his face to one of deepest gravity, what he supposed me to mean, I added, "She broke the engagement a month ago."

"Oh," said he, not relieved, mother, or not showing relief, but very seriously kind, "I'm sorry, Mr. Godwin."

"Thank you, captain," I said, and got myself away. I don't mind having told; indeed I did it deliberately, quite for the good of his peace of mind. It's always a relief to strike one rival off the list, and if ever he gets really interested in Vera he'll find plenty of others blocking the way.

When I gave David Vera's message he flushed up at first with pleasure, then remembered that an evening call would spoil a company conference, which he has taken to attending. As usual, he looked to Knudsen for advice, and that wily person said, "Go in the afternoon and perhaps you'll miss her," which relieved the boy considerably. Our time is too horribly full for social calls.

Tomorrow evening there is to be a company boxing match, one-minute rounds, no decision given. It is said that Randall has entered, and Pickle remarked thereupon, "I'd like to have the laying of him out." "No fear," said Corder. "Randall is to box a man he knows, for points only, very gently." "Yellow," said Clay. Lucy said nothing, but looked a good deal. There actually are coming lines of firmness around his mouth.

Good-by.

DICK.

Private Godwin to His Mother

Plattsburg, Thursday the 21st Sept.

Dear Mother:—

I am writing at about 7.30 o'clock on the range, after having fired my practice shots to make my sighting sure, and now with time to wait before my rapid-fire test. Imagine the usual confusion, the heavy rapping of the shots, the calling over of names, and the buzz and laughter of the men waiting near me. A perfect morning, the dew just burning off, a little breeze from the lake, and not a cloud in the sky.

We are shooting from the two hundred yard mark, sitting position, and since I have watched a few rounds, I am able to tell you the way of it. —As the guns become silent with the disappearance of the targets the Lieutenant calls, "Next men up!" Those who have just shot rise and nervously stand aside, to watch the scoring of their ten shots. The new men, while loading and locking their pieces, also watch the record of their predecessors. Passing behind D Company a few minutes ago, I saw the flag cross one target six times. I did not see the beginning of the score, and how many more misses the poor devil made, I can only guess. The men go away with their scores, the new ones stand waiting.

From the left rings the high call, "Ready on

the right!" The lieutenant responds to his men, "Unlock your pieces." To the waiting men the interval is long. Then slowly the blank targets begin to sink and the tops of the true ones to rise. It is the signal. The men drop to the sitting position and settle the butts in their shoulders; the muzzles rise, waver, and steady. Then together "Pol-lop!" and the whole line, faster and faster, bursts into the rap-rap-rapping of the continued fire. Along the line, little spurts of flame; a thin haze rises from the muzzles and at once disappears. Beside each shooter kneel two coaches, one calling the time, the other exhorting, warning, entreating. A distinct lag in the firing between forty-five and fifty seconds—the men are loading their second clips. Then the fire gradually quickens to the full rate, the coaches urging the slow ones on, holding the hasty ones back. The fire slackens, and seems stopped, when as the targets sink at the ninety seconds, two last hasty shots slap out. The round is over. In the brief time the three dozen men have fired three hundred and sixty shots.

(*Later.*) My turn approached, and I stood waiting, the sling clasped on my arm. I felt the strain of the long wait before there came the call, Ready! To my coaches I had said—to one, "Don't let me shoot too fast, and keep me on *my* target"; to the other, "Remind me to squeeze." Then the blank target, beside the great 28, began to sink, and down I dropped. I was not

nervous now; at least I did not tremble. I tried to fire slow, to squeeze, to keep on my own target, (for truly, as the captain lately said, firing on another man's target is one of the sad things of life.) My second clip I had to shoot quicker until my last shot, when the coach said, "Plenty of time." So I sighted and squeezed my best, felt that I could call the bullseye, and pulling out the bolt for the last time, to show that the breech and magazine were empty, stood up and stepped back. Now for the score.

The target rose at last. The red disk was all I hoped for, but there came the white, again the white, again the white, again, again, again, then three times the red, and once the black. I still waited, having lost count. Would the flag come now? But no, the target sank, and my coaches congratulated me on a forty-five!

(*Evening. In the tent.*) Well, I won't put in too much detail for you, to whom perhaps this shooting has no interest. We finished at two hundred yards and moved back, carrying benches, racks, chairs, flags, everything, and began over again at three hundred yards, prone. The men were mostly very much on the stretch, and I admit that I was, for while I now was practically sure of my grade of marksman, I might, by shooting especially well, even become a sharpshooter. Lucy was in a similar state, marksman being within his grasp. Randall was swaggering; he had been shooting well. But Knudsen was very

anxious, surprising in so cool a fellow. "To be Expert," he said, "I've got to make a fifty. Confound it, I'm afraid that shot I sent into the wrong target will ruin my chances. I need the little leeway it would give."

Well, he missed it by two, and that little error undid him. Lucy got his grade of marksman, and his excitement was delightful. He sought out each member of the squad and called for congratulations. How disgusted his mother would be to see him with his hand on Pickle's shoulder, discussing the score, for really, don't you know, socially Pickle is less than nobody! I made my grade as sharpshooter, just made it, with a forty-nine.

Poor Reardon! His scores had not been good, only a miracle could make him marksman, but he lost his chance. Loretta—

I'll tell you about Loretta, a sergeant whom the boys have nick-named thus. Luckily he is not in our platoon; but we soon got to know the lofty smile with which he passed up and down the street, and his contempt for the enlisted man. Such, my dear mother, is the inflating power of a little authority.

Well, he has been very busy with the shooting, making a good record himself, and helping, as all the sergeants did, with the scoring. Needing a scorer at one of the targets, he took poor Reardon and put him at work just when his last turn was coming on, and in spite of the fact that he had

already served long hours at the job. Reardon protested, Loretta promised to let him have his turn, but when the shooting was all over there was poor Reardon still at the desk, and his last round was not fired. We noticed that on the way back to camp he was very silent and cast down, but we did not know why till we were cleaning our guns in the tent, all the racks being occupied outside. Then I questioned Reardon, and the facts came out.

All of us were wrathy, but you should have seen Lucy! Tears of anger came into his eyes as he started up. "I'll go at once and tell the captain!" Reardon clutched him. "No," said the good fellow. "I hadn't a chance to qualify. It's perfectly true. Loretta told me so."

"Loretta told you so!" echoed David. He was quite white and shaking at this instance of adding insult to injury. "By God!"

He was for going at once and complaining, but Reardon wouldn't let him. "Then," said David, "wait till the hike. If you don't get even with him then, I will!"

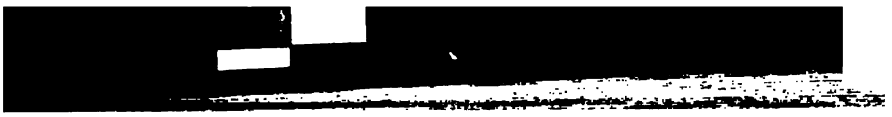
I wouldn't tell this story to David's mother. She might think her son too sympathetic with an "outsider."

The fellows have been in the habit of cooing at Loretta as he passes their tents. His pet name precedes him down the street, the coos come from the shadowed interiors. It has been meant harmlessly. But this story of Reardon has spread

rapidly, and I thought I detected a snarl in the cooing when Loretta just went by. There is something in David's threat. Wait till the hike!

This afternoon we had our usual drill and calisthenics, after which I went swimming in the lake, as I do daily, though under certain difficulties. The beach is very stony and bruises the feet, and the piers that have been built at our two bathing places are quite inadequate, both as accommodating too few men at a time, and next as not going out into deep water. Perhaps early in the summer the water at the ends may be up to one's shoulders, but now it is scarcely above the waist, and none but the cleverest and most venturesome dare to dive. So many would like the diving that it is a pity that a little money can't be expended here. However, the water is fine, even if it is now getting so cold that some of the men are giving up their swim. We often have surf here, when the southeast wind quarters across the bay all the way from Burlington, and then the fun is notable.

The scene at the foot of the pier particularly struck me today, after the men were out. There were nearly a hundred of them in a rather narrow compass, so close to each other, on the boulders of the beach, that they reminded me of the pictures one sees of big birds in their colonies. The men were naked, and every one in active motion, rubbing down. The sight of so much brown and



pink skin, of so many moving bodies and arms and legs, was most peculiar and amusing.

The list of company officers has been published. Two of our best sergeants becoming lieutenants, other sergeants have been named, and the list of corporals and sub-squad-leaders has been fixed. In our squad Bannister and Reardon stand as before. Ban quietly told us that he was glad to get the appointment. "I had my eye on you," he said to Knudsen, "and on you," to me. "This will please my old father: he was a corporal in the Civil War." And good Ban forgot us as he thought of the satisfaction of the old man at home.

Tonight at conference we were given definite details of the scheme for reimbursing us for our travelling expenses and our mess. The government will repay those who take the oath of allegiance—and everyone is hunting for the nigger in the woodpile. There is so general a sentiment that the War Department tricked the militia into taking the oath of six years' service before starting for Texas, that none of us cares to be caught promising too much. But I feel that the form of oath, which was read aloud tonight, is pretty straightforward. We enlist only for the period of the camp, and for instruction only. I shall take the oath. If before the period is over the government takes us away for service anywhere, I suppose there will be an emergency to justify it.

We were also given additional facts regarding the hike. Having so small a regiment, yet having the baggage train of the large August camp, we are to go on the longest hike yet, eleven days on the road and in the field, ten nights in the pup-tents. We are sorting our belongings to take or to leave, and David is wondering how he can carry all his exquisite appointments.

But he has just come out strong. Company conference being over, there was held the boxing match which one of the sergeants has been promoting, and the whole company (officers discreetly absent) formed the ring and applauded the heroism. Much of it would not interest you, yet you could have stood a glimpse of it—the circle of men, good-naturedly applauding, the heavy shadows under the overhead light, the gray-green uniformity of men and sand, the two dancing figures, and the pat-pat of the gloves. There were some neat bouts, and then the promoter made an announcement, which to my surprise I saw Randall, stripped to the waist, furtively trying to stop.

He had on his left, said the sergeant, one remaining contestant, whose opponent had just sent word that he had hurt his wrist. Would any gentleman be willing to provide Mr. Randall with an antagonist?

No one came forward. Randall looked very formidable, with his handsome features and also a most superb set of muscles. I was saying to

myself that perhaps I'd better give him a go, when I caught sight of Lucy's face, peering between the men in front of him, and so plainly full of desire that I waited. Then Corder, on the other side of him, jogged David in the ribs, and said in a low voice, "He called you Lucy!" In an instant David, without a look behind or a moment's hesitation, was pushing through the ring. "Let me try." And he stepped out into the light.

Someone caught me by the arm, and there was Knudsen, very angry. "Why didn't you stop him?" he demanded. "He never can stand up to that fellow." But I, feeling quite as satisfied as ever I felt in my life, smiled him down. "Somehow I think he can," said I, and pushed after David, to act as his second.

Oh, I coached him all I could, and in the rests I helped the gasping boy in every way I knew how. The rounds were short, but too long for him in his still soft condition. And he knew so little of the game! Had Randall, who really had boxed before, used his head, poor David would have stood no chance whatever. Yet the boy's insight was correct. No sooner did Randall see before him the lad's unmistakably eager face, and know from David's first rush that here was a fight, than he was flustered. So as boxing the bout was nothing: neither could hit clean, parries were clumsy, much was accident. David's very ardor betrayed him, and he came back to me at the end of

each round quite winded. But for the rest, nothing could be finer. Randall was twenty pounds the heavier, and slight David staggered when the blows came home, yet always he came back. His panting persistence, his determination to strike, were too much for the other. He held back, and David came on; he drew aside, and David followed him; he struck, and David without parrying came right through, and landed blow after blow somewhere.

The men were yelling presently, here was so evidently grit against mere muscle, spirit against flesh. Randall grew angry and hit hard, but he was wild; he grew afraid and tried to clinch, but his rush was feeble. David jabbed him repeatedly in the ribs, drew off, and for the first time in the three rounds (the referee was just calling time) hit Randall neatly—on the nose.

And Randall, in pain but not hurt (for the boy couldn't hit hard) nevertheless believed himself finished. I think he wanted to stagger and fall at full length, but he only succeeded in sitting down. Shout upon shout upon shout! Then we of the squad took David, groggy with his own efforts, rubbed him and fanned him and swabbed him, and finally walked him off between us.

Knudsen said in my ear, "You were right. That was worth a thousand dollars."

A fellow from another squad tried to be complimentary. "Well done, Lucy!"

Pickle, without any ceremony, pushed in be-

tween. "Cut that out! His name is Farnham."

The chap was puzzled. "But you don't call him that."

"We know him better now," said Pickle. "We call him David."

And David, who had been leaning heavily on me, at the words stood upright. He had been smiling with satisfaction; now he looked happy. He put his arm over Pickle's shoulder as the other fellow walked away. "Thanks, Pick, old man," he said.

Knudsen and Corder and I fell behind and shook hands. The name Lucy was dead and buried.

David wouldn't go to bed; he sat contentedly on his cot, sopping liniment on a bruised lip, while fellows kept coming in from other squads, to congratulate. After a while I went out, and seeing a little knot of our men at the captain's tent, joined them.

The officers like to have the men come to them with questions, and after repeated invitations issued at general conferences, the men have come to believe it. So there is growing up a little habit of stopping at the captain's tent for a question which often extends into an interchange of ideas from which each side benefits. But they weren't on any technical subject tonight; the men had got the captain talking on the topic of an officer's life, and they had just reached the items of his

expenses. I had never particularly thought of this side of the matter before; I knew that an officer is technically a gentleman and must dress as such, but that his pay is so small, his perquisites so few, and his necessary uniforms so many, I had not realized. To tell the truth, the little group of us who listened were really rather shocked that these men who work so hard for the nation are under such burdens. The captain perceived it, and for his own interest suddenly turned the tables on us.

"I have been rather frank, gentlemen," he said. "Now I know your expenses are such as you choose to make them; but would you mind telling me how your incomes compare with mine?"

The question was perfectly fair, for the men had been pumping him, and they responded at once. "I count on eight thousand yearly from my factory," said one. The next said that his salary was six. The third, with a little embarrassed laugh, admitted that he earned ten thousand. And the next said that last year he cleaned up forty thousand dollars. As you can imagine, these were all men older than the average rookie. They wear their uniforms badly, some of them, being no longer lithe and lissome; and yet the forty thousand dollar man was lean and hard as an Indian. I had so far known him only as a sportsman who loved to talk about big game. The captain, as he listened, nodded gravely at each statement, and when the last had spoken

turned his eye on me. I could only tell him the truth—twelve thousand as my salary, and perhaps an equal amount on the side.

He drew a long breath. "Well, gentlemen, you have my congratulations. On the other hand, I'm not sorry to have told you these facts about army life. It's well that you civilians should understand conditions. As for myself, I went into the service with my eyes open, and I'm not yet ready to change it."

His eye rather lingered on me. I have the impression that he's acutely conscious of my presence whenever I'm about. Is that Vera's doing? Do you suppose she's got him too?

Love from

DICK.

Letter from Vera Wadsworth to Her Sister Frances

Plattsburg Post, Thursday, Sept. 21.

Dear Frances:—

I wish I hadn't come. Two of them are in earnest! Lieutenant Pendleton is here every day, very gay but very desperate. I use the Colonel all I can against him, and the innocent old man will talk shop with him by the hour. But sometimes the lieutenant manages to get me alone, and only my best cold-storage manner has saved me so far.

But if the lieutenant is the kind that takes you by storm, Captain Kirby is one that will lay siege. He doesn't come so often as the other, he doesn't stay so long, he doesn't say so much; but he is the kind that sticks. I may be able to stave off the lieutenant, but I shall have to have it out with the captain.

I wish you were here. You would be such a help! Can't you manage it? Oh, Frances dear, I don't like army life. Why couldn't I be satisfied with Dick? Come and help me!

Vera.

From Private Richard Godwin to His Mother

Plattsburg, Friday, Sept. 22, 1916.

Dear Mother:—

It rained in the night, and between showers I went out and fixed the cap of the tent, loosening also the cords. If we don't attend to these latter as soon as rain begins they are likely to shrink and tear the canvas, or perhaps pull up the tent pegs. And if everything holds till morning, then the job of loosening the ropes, even with three men to each, is considerable. But I was in time. In the morning it was cloudy, but we had dry weather for our baths and breakfast, and for making up our packs. Then the rain began to patter, and we to groan. The bugle blew, and we stood expectant at the doors of our tents, waiting for the whistle. We awaited the order, "full equipment, ponchos over all," but the call came, "non-commissioned officers, with their drill regulations, at the head of the street." The corporals and sergeants went, the privates in the tents cheered madly, and now we are awaiting what may happen next.

So in the interval, just a few words about our proficiency, and our partial failure so far. We haven't done very well, and that's a fact. We march badly, losing distance, interval, and align-

ment; we dress slowly, we fall in with much delay, and our various manœuvres are done with much hesitation and uncertainty. For all this the captain has, as the boys say, plentifully "bawled us out," constantly working us more than any other officer has done in the battalion. We can't deny that we are ragged and slovenly, but why is it?

To begin with we are trying to do, as the captain acknowledges, more than could be hoped of ordinary recruits, we being (ahem!) of the intelligent class. But intellectually we are uneven, some of us plainly not being born to be soldiers, so that with the best of will they lag. Again, the Plattsburg movement has reached the stage in which the men have not all come with the same impulse to serve the country, a considerable proportion being, as it were, substitutes, being sent by the public spirit of employers who cannot come themselves. The motive is excellent, and they choose, I make no doubt, the best men available among their clerks. But not all of these are suitable material, some being here for a lark, and some being too young to be serious. Such fellows impede the progress of the others. When the movement takes still wider scope, or when we reach the stage of compulsory general training, evidently the leaven that pretty successfully leavens this lump will then, being much diluted, have harder work to do, and to make the mob into a regiment will take double the time.

Finally, I have already spoken of another of

our weaknesses, the inexperience of our non-coms. Most of our corporals are here for the first time; many of the sergeants, though familiar with the corporal's job, are new at the higher work. Indeed some of them have never worn stripes before. They are therefore so necessarily intent on guarding against their own mistakes (which still are plentiful) that they can't give enough attention to the blunders of the men. Nor, as I have said, do I think that the professional non-com will help us here, unless specially chosen for understanding the Plattsburger. The martinet drill-sergeant whose severities the docile German may bear, would never be tolerated among us. What we need is to make it a matter of pride for the veterans of one camp to come back and serve as corporals in the next and as sergeants in the next. With regular non-coms in the way there is no chance for the civilian to make himself a valuable reserve man; but if he can be tempted by promotion to come again and yet again, he is not only now serving the training cause better than anyone else can, but he is building up a body of responsible men whom the country can call upon at need.

Theories, my dear mother, theories. I will test them on the hike.

—It is the end of a day which I shall look back upon with respect. Curious that when at breakfast someone asked me if I found the work strenuous, I answered that so far I had not found it

strenuous at all. Since when we have had our heaviest day's work.

The weather was showery and chilly, and the non-coms returned from their conference with orders for us to wear sweaters and ponchos. Being put into close battalion formation, we were informed by the major that an enemy had landed at Keesville, some twenty-odd miles south, and that we were to march out and get in touch with him. So our three companies followed the first battalion along the road to AuSable, having out the proper patrols—point and communicating files and rear guard, with combat patrols—and we found ourselves on a real hike.

It was tramp, tramp, tramp on the hard macadam all the way. Now remember that though we have been on hard roads some part of every day, we have mostly been on gravel or the turf of the fields and the parade ground. So we weren't really toughened to the work. The weather bothered us also. The ponchos came off after a while, then we got heated in the sun, and were feeling the weight of our sweaters when the clouds closed in and a shower came. Thus it changed most of the time. Every forty-five to fifty minutes we stopped to rest, spread our ponchos, and lay down. To be exact, after the first forty-five minutes we rested fifteen, and after each succeeding fifty we rested ten. We marched nearly four miles, then turned back. Our company was now second in the column, but none of

the patrol duty fell to me, for which I was rather glad, as a heel began to bother me.

A man from Squad Seven fell out from the column. "This finishes the camp for me," he said ruefully as he left us. He has rigid arches, and it seems that the doctors have warned him that he could not stand the marching. He sat and waited for some kind motorist, and after an hour passed us, comfortable in a limousine. There were others among us who got pretty weary; but on the other hand there were plenty, I am glad to say, who were not tired, and whistled and sang most of the way, to the advantage of those who felt weary. Some of these blades spying a couple of bold damsels, cried "Eyes Right!" at which they giggled. But the captain made us march at attention, and explained, when we got back to camp, that we were expected to mind our manners in the presence of the other sex (or as he put it, persons in female attire) else we might be sure of marching at attention for the whole of the way.

We were back at the usual time, after seven miles and a half, and I, wet from inside and from out, was glad to wash and change and find leisure to inspect my troublesome heel, on which I found two blisters which Clay, being as I told you a medico, skilfully doctored.

But there was no rest for the weary. I foolishly rejoiced when I escaped the work of helping to make up the shooting records, also (perhaps not so foolishly) when the typhoid sufferers were

taken to be inoculated for the third time. But while the captain supervised the company clerks, the lieutenant, in anticipation of a regimental parade, took us out on the field. See how carefully it was done. As we were but the fraction of a company he lined us up and made up squads afresh, a corporal to each, then instructed us in our parade work, and drilled us for two hours. Having my two blisters, I did not enjoy it, and the men were groaning all around me. He was as hard to please as the captain; once, looking back along the line as we marched company front, he said, "The ancestors of this bunch certainly must have been a lot of snakes!" But I'll venture to say that none of us, after this, will forget how to oblique in making the turn.

After ten minutes' rest, we were taken to calisthenics, after which I anticipated a good loaf. But no, we were assembled, the whole regiment, for a conference concerning our return home by government aid, the major and a railroad agent instructing us in the terms. I was glad to find that I can simply go home on my return ticket, and let the treasury department pay me when it's good and ready; and after standing in line for half an hour I was able to state my intention to do this.

There was then just time to change for the parade, which was partly interesting, partly tedious. Thanks to the lieutenant's drill, we made no mistakes, though at one time we had to make

our way at company front among the boxes and barrels strewed in the neighborhood of the quartermaster's shack. Lieutenant Pendleton briefly said, when we were back in the street, "You did well." And the captain, who left the scoring long enough to watch the parade, joked us on being mountain goats.

The blisters are no worse for the afternoon's work. It is raining steadily. Love from

DICK.

Extract from the Letter of Miss Mamie Marshall to Her Friend, Miss Rosetta Jones

. . . And I waved a handkerchiff, so some of the men cried Eyes Rite They were awfully hansome especially one with a curling black mustarsh but that horrid captain Kirby stopped them from looking at us and the whole colum went by without paying us any more attention it was mean. . . .

From Private Godwin

Plattsburg, Saturday the 23d.

Dear Mother:—

We are having really rainy weather. Till now it has rained but a few hours at most, with intervals for drying. But it rained steadily all last evening, drummed on the tight tent all night, and was still heavily at work when the bugler failed to blow his horn this morning. Watches not being at all uniform, men got themselves out of bed at their leisure. The first sergeant did not think to wake us, and then was disgusted when many of the men did not turn out at the first call. Those who were there made a crooked line around a great puddle which stood in the depression between our ridge and the head of the street.

But now, after breakfast, everyone is cussing. "What are we to wear?" asked Knudsen of the first sergeant, who answered snappily, "The usual things for a hike." Knudsen came back grumbling: "How were we to know that we are going on a hike?" The word was passed along: "Packs," "No packs." "Sweaters," "No sweaters." Then it was said that we were to wear handkerchiefs in our hats, sure sign of a sham battle pending. So at last at the whistle we turned out with sweaters, packs, ponchos ready (for though it had stopped raining we did not feel safe) and some of us with handkerchiefs twined in our hat-bands. Once in

line we were sent back—"No packs, no rifles." Again we came out and lined up again, only to be sent back once more. "No sweaters." By this time it was rumored that we were at last to take the oath, and this was confirmed by the sight of the captain carrying a bunch of slips, containing the oath, which in the last few days we have filled out, and yesterday had signed. The men both grumbled and joked. "We can't take the oath with sweaters on? Why not?" "Got on woollen underwear? Get cotton. You can't take the oath in wool." So at last we were in line again, and then the captain began to look through the slips. "Here's a man written his name twice differently. Make out a new slip.—Here's a lot of men have signed with lead pencil. It's got to be in ink or indelible pencil." Here he was met by a lawyer, who had signed in pencil, and said, "A pencil signature is valid." "Not here," said the captain, sticking to the regulations, and the slips had to be changed.

When we were ready we were marched to the flag, where the company was drawn up on three sides of a square. The major then said—

—I must break this off to describe what is going on, which is too interesting to ignore. For the second time this afternoon we are shut up in the dark tent, everyone having fled before a pelting shower. We were first aligned for calisthenics, but were dismissed on account of Shower No. 1, a driving rain that lasted half an hour. Now we

were just ready for parade—think what it would have been on that slimy, soggy ground!—when the approach of Shower No. 2 sent us all to cover. It is pelting furiously; Pickle and Knudsen, with the intrenching tools which luckily were served out to us this afternoon, are digging frantically to keep the water away from their suit-cases. Through the tied flaps of the doorway Clay has been yelling at Squad Nine, our opposite neighbors, and there is the greatest joy and confusion. Knudsen having finished his job, is jeering at Pickle, who had promised to be first. And now he has taken Pickle in hand, and is showing him his mistakes. It is thundering and lightening. "I don't see," says David with slow wonderment, "how it can rain much harder." Now Knudsen, at the door, imitates the first sergeant's whistle and alarms our neighbors, who peer anxiously out. "Corporals, get your men out!" cries he, laughing heartily as the others consult. "They look like a bunch of dogs," says he, "with their heads sticking out of their kennels." Now it slackens, I hear laughter in the street, and in comes a neighbor. "Boys, it's a scream! There's four inches of water in the next two tents. Their baggage is all afloat."

(Later.) The rain slackening just then, out we all swarmed, the whole street becoming alive with men, who with shouts crowded toward the great puddle which completely filled the breadth of the street, and had flooded tents Four and Six. Look-

ing into these, I saw the glimmer of lantern-light reflected on water, the beds moved about and piled with baggage. The sandy soil can drain an ordinary shower, but this was too heavy, and there was but one thing to try. Yelling, some fifteen men got out their intrenching tools and began to dig a ditch to lead the water off to the field below. At first I thought they could not do it, for the ridge was at least two feet above the level of the puddle. But leaving enough earth to form a dam, the men in a line so vigorously worked the strong little shovels that in scarcely more than five minutes they were ready to break down the dam. They broke it, the water came pouring through, and with cheers the men kept the channel clear. With great brooms the men of tents Four and Six swept out their domiciles, other men dug the channel deeper, still others on the further slope kept the flood from the other tents, and as we formed for supper (the two parts of the company on the two sides of the dividing puddle) the lake was more than half drained away. By the time we came back from mess the puddle was clean gone, and the captain was devising means to get the men of tents Four and Six in dry quarters for the night.

And now to take up my narrative, earlier broken off.—The major, as we were assembled for the oath, said a few words in explanation of it, then read it aloud, while we stood with hats off and right hands raised, before the flag. At the

end each man said "I do!" and then one by one we acknowledged our signatures on our slips. So I am now enlisted in the army of the United States, bound to obey the President and the Secretary of War, and entirely at the mercy of our superior officers.

But they have been merciful to us today in sparing us two soakings, and I have had my own personal share. While we were standing, waiting for the major to come and give us the oath, the captain's eye fell on me. Evidently he pondered for a moment, then he beckoned me out of the ranks. Said he, "I thought you weren't to take the oath." I answered, "I have always meant to take it, sir." "Oh," said he, "then I was misinformed. Well, that is what prevented me from making you sub-squad-leader, and I'll do it today. Just say nothing about it beforehand." So I saluted and stepped back. When we were lined up in the company street again (having first put our sweaters on by our own decision, and then having taken them off by order of the major, who presently took us to regimental drill on the parade ground) the lieutenant announced, "Mr. Godwin will be sub-squad-leader in Squad Eight." So I dropped back into the rear rank, my rear-rank man took my place, Reardon gave place to me, and the other men moved to numbers two and one. In that order we drilled, and good Reardon showed me his duties. To make sure that the change is permanent, Bannister asked the

captain, and here I am installed in a very minor office.

I am out of the front rank now, but the parades, which it is interesting to watch, are all over, and I shall get acquainted with still another set of our neighbors. On the hike I shall still march on the outside of the column, which gives some freedom of action, and as Knudsen contends, better air. Reardon is very nice about the change; the boys all recognize it as coming from my bluff at giving orders. Yet Reardon showed, as I drill beside him today, that he knows more of the business than I do.

Bannister shook his fist at me. "Consarn ye," (he imitates the farmer to perfection) "yer shan't git my job!"

"Coming strong!" I answered.

Knudsen, with the energy and tact which characterize him, has reorganized the squad on the basis of this change of mine, moving the men about so that he has David as his rear rank man, which means that they sleep in the same tent on the hike, and that Knudsen still has the boy in charge. Of course Bannister agreed to it all. He and I shall tent together.

Corder feels that he has had a narrow escape. The captain sent for him and offered him the position of equipment sergeant, or some such title, which means some minor responsibility and a seat on one of the baggage trucks. Corder, in a panic, begged permission to stay with the

squad and carry his gun; and the captain, saying how disgusted the bugler was with his new job, and that two disappointed men in the company were more than he could stand, let him off. Corder, after telling us the tale, got out his mirror and studied himself. "It's all this confounded beard of mine," he complained. "I'm only forty-five, and my hair is still black, but the thing has turned gray and makes me seem old. It's sickening to have the fellows so thoughtful of me. Godwin, if ever you get respectful, I'll slay you."

The shooting records are posted, and to our great satisfaction our company stands best. That doesn't mean that we have the highest individual score, or even the greatest number of expert riflemen. But it does mean that we have both the most men in all three qualified grades and the highest average score per man. Practically that means that of all the six companies we should be deadliest against an infantry attack, also that as a consequence we should ourselves be safest. As Pickle says, "The captain has done one good job."

The forehanded among us (and yet after all we are at it pretty late) are making maps for the hike in imitation of those which the officers have posted for us to study. At the Exchange can be bought contour maps of all this region, covering the whole area of the hike. These we are cutting out in squares and pasting on linen, cheese-cloth, or even mosquito netting. Then we mark on them

the camps, the route, and all along the way the important cross-roads within a mile of our march, which we number according to the officers' sample. If after this we can get some shellac, we coat the map against the weather. Had I only known enough, I should have brought with me proper cloth, glue and shellac for this purpose; for of course the rush for these materials has practically used up all neighboring supplies.

Between showers today we have begun our preparations for the hike, directions concerning which were read us. We have turned in our condiment-cans and bacon-tins—so much less weight to carry. David is in secret dismay over the small equipment which is allowed us, and has spent many long minutes over the beautiful little sole leather trunk which he keeps under his cot, and which contains so many knickknacks. He has been making little piles here, and little piles there, and then, with knitted brow, changing them all about. He has not asked for advice, and none of us has offered it. Pickle, whose personal outfit is of the most meagre, has been watching him in delight.

However, David is permanently lightened of one part of his equipment. Word went round that we were to have rifle-inspection, at which there rose in the tent a great clamor for patches, of which we had none, nor the store tent either. David was absent, and Knudsen, saying "I'll get patches," asked Clay for his surgical scissors,

and going to David's cot, took from the great collection of conveniences which the boy still hoped to take with him, a set of his beautiful silk pajamas. The jacket Knudsen tore into strips (we all the while watching in pregnant silence) then cut them into squares, and when David returned we were all at work on our guns.

"They tell me," he said, "that we're to have rifle inspection. Have you fellows any patches?"

"Plenty," said Knudsen, and handed him some made out of the gaudiest part of the pattern.

David, as he inspected these, first grew very red, then hastily demanded, "Who cut these up?"

"I did," said Knudsen very serenely. "No pajamas on the hike, David."

And the boy, who is still very proud of coming into his own name, laughed, asked for Clay's scissors, and cut up the rest of his suit. Then he stuffed into his trunk the other pair which he had intended to take with him on the hike.

One last story, to show a different side of our Plattsburg activities. You know we have a cavalry camp here, and a medical department, where volunteers come exactly as to our infantry regiment. Well, Corder came back from the medicos lately, where he went to visit a friend, with a great tale of the mending of a cavalryman's broken jaw by one of the volunteer surgeons, a Boston dentist. Corder, being professor-like in appearance, was not detected as an impostor, and

stood close at hand in the ring of doctors who watched the clinic.

"It was done under field conditions," said he, "the operator using only an alcohol lamp, a small pair of nippers, and about eight inches of ordinary electric light wire, which happened to be handy. The insulation was scraped from the cable, and its various fine wires were burned clean in the flame of the lamp. The rookie was then put on a table in the company street, and the doctor took a turn with one of the fine wires around a tooth behind the break, twisting the ends together. The same was done with a tooth in front of the break; and then in the upper jaw wires were twisted around teeth above the lower two. An assistant then held the broken jaw in place, and the doctor twisted tight together the wires from the lower back tooth and the upper front tooth, and then those from the upper back tooth and the lower front tooth. He cut off the ends, made all smooth, and the work was done, all in a very few minutes. The jaw could not move, and was bound to heal perfectly. The doctors all said they never had seen anything so simple or so clever."

We thought the same; Clay, as a budding doctor, was envious of Corder for having seen it. "Too bad for the chap to lose the hike," said Bannister.

"He won't lose it!" replied Corder. "The fellow can drink, of course. He can get any

liquid, or even a cereal or a stew, around behind his back teeth, so he's simply going right along with us."

So much for smartness, and for grit!

The showers lasting long enough to spoil conferences, and then the sky clearing, I went this evening to say good-by to Vera, which I had half promised to do. David, by the way, to whom a social duty used to be sacred, called yesterday afternoon, as Knudsen suggested, and was manfully relieved to find her out. But I found her in, and alone. She told me that her sister Frances was coming, made rather a point of it, expecting me to manage to see her, though on the hike how can I? There was a delightful old colonel there, who rather took to me, and when on the coming of Lieutenant Pendleton I naturally tried to make myself scarce, the colonel took me into his study to show me the service pistol that they used in his day. And when finally I took my leave of him, on my way out (missing the front door and blundering into the parlor) I ran into the most distressing sort of scene.

Pendleton and Kirby were both there, and the captain having his hat in his hand, I imagine he'd only just come. The lieutenant was fiery red; I think I know the look of a man when he's been turned down, and I saw it in his face. Vera was in that cold and lofty mood of hers when nothing counts but the idea she has in mind; no one seeing her so would think she ever again could be

gentle or tender—poor Vera, with all her struggles to perfect herself, and yet with so much manner, yes and so much headstrong will, hiding it all. It seemed as if she had called the captain to witness, perhaps to agree in, something she had just announced; you know it, mother, that old idea of hers that caused me such years of effort. I heard the words just as I parted the curtains, and they stopped me dead.

"A man should be able to offer a woman the best that there is."

Pendleton with his head hanging low, Kirby gone white under his tan and looking as if he had been shot through the heart—but that was not all. Vera herself looked sick and—there is no other word than desperate. Explain it if you can. All I could do was to find my way out as quickly and silently as I could.

I went across the parade-ground and walked up and down by the lake, to still my many memories. Poor Vera! She is still groping, having a woman's instincts but yet suppressing them. If only the right man could show her her true self, she is so honest she would recognize it. But where is he? or how could he get to know the heart which she herself does not understand?

On the way back to camp I went through the woods, and there I passed the poor lieutenant, walking with dragging step, still with his head upon his breast. But when I came to the company street, there in front of his tent stood the

captain, a different picture. He was as straight as a—well, as a soldier, which he was, every inch of him, with his head up and his jaw set. I saluted, and he returned the salute, always with that searching look at me which now I'm sure of the meaning of. Yes, Vera's got him too.

It's time, for every reason, that we were away from here.

DICK.

FROM VERA WADSWORTH TO HER SISTER FRANCES

Plattsburg Post, Sept. 23, 1916.

DEAR FRANCES:—

I am so glad you are coming, but wish you were coming by train instead of with the Chapmans in their car. For I can't get you here a minute too soon, nor have you too much to myself. The Chapmans say they want to see a hike camp, and how can I excuse myself from going too?

Everything has gone wrong, quite wrong. I thought I could keep the lieutenant off, but I did not realize what a soldier is. Last night he had to have his answer, and I was telling him as gently as I could, when the stupid servant opened the front door to the captain and let him make his own way into the parlor, where he stood before I had heard a sound. If he didn't see what was going on, he was blind.

And then I lost my head over the sudden notion that here was my chance to get rid of him too. For the man frightens me, Frances; I never met one who was so steady and so determined and so strong. Maybe I blundered; I don't know. But I can't have him getting to know me any better; I want never to see him again. So I said (I know I stiffened horribly as I said it, the thing was so uncalled for and so un-nice) "The lieutenant and I were just discussing army life, cap-

tain, and how little it has for a woman. For a man ought to be able to offer the best that there is." It hurt him; it hurt his opinion of me. He went away almost without a word. I never was so ashamed; never before have I felt like a butcher. But if I meant it why shouldn't I say it? Let him hate me, if only he lets me alone.

They march out Monday, and as I hear the drums go by on the main road I shall be glad. But I do so want to see you. Hurry the Chapmans all you can.

Longingly,

VERA.

From David Ridgway Farnham, 3d, to His Father

Plattsburg, Sunday the 24th.

Dear Father:—

I am writing just a few lines to say that we are off tomorrow on the hike, in light marching order, and with very little bagage. I shall not even take my pajjamas. But I'd rather you wouldn't tell mother this; it would upset her. Will you tell her that I'm really too busy to write, but that I'm in very fine condition, and she's not to worry about me? And she said in her last letter something about taking a trip up here so as to be near us on the hike if anything should happen to me. This is really what I'm writing you about. Please stop her, father. I'd really rather she wouldn't even be here when we break camp to take me home in the car. For I'd like to go home with the Boston bunch in the train.

I think in my earlier letters I wasn't fair to some of the fellows in our squad. Perhaps I didn't know how to get at them at first. Even now I don't suppose mother would see anything in them; yet I'm sure that if I could introduce you to them you'd understand why I like them.

Just keep mother from worrying about me on the hike. I shall be all right. Affectionatly,

David.

FROM PRIVATE RICHARD GODWIN TO HIS MOTHER

Plattsburg, Sunday the 24th.

DEAR MOTHER:—

This morning it has turned chilly, without sun, and with clouds threatening more rain. As before, I did some washing before breakfast, and now have on the line considerable of my laundry, which I am anxiously feeling of from time to time. If it does not dry, then I shall have to buy some new things for tomorrow.

There being no duties today, men are neglecting church and getting ready for the hike. We must turn in our mattress covers, pillow slips, barrack bags, and for those who do not wish to buy, the overcoats. The captain has sent out word that overcoats may be bought, and I have secured mine by the payment of $9.96; for those who have not the change, the price is $10. Down the street from the store-tent extends a line of men with their surplus in their arms, while I take advantage of their necessarily slow progress to write this to you. One of my pillow-slips I shall retain by the sacrifice of seven cents; it shall serve as a bag to keep my extra things together on the march.

Men are making sure of their homeward accommodations. When I went to the D. & H.

tent it was so full of waiting men that I came away, and must go again. So much for neglecting a duty till the last.

Word has just gone down the street that we must pack this morning for the hike, and give our bags in at the Y. M. C. A. for storage. So we shall be on a hike basis from now on, and tonight I shall sleep in my clothes, with my blankets and poncho made up into a sleeping bag. It is wonderful what the Y. M. C. A. does for us, giving to all who come every kind of information, cashing our checks, supplying pen and ink and paper to the epistolary, and giving minor helps constantly. It is to them a very burdensome expense, which they have no fund to meet. I shall leave something behind to show my appreciation.

For the coming ten days I have gone into woollens for the first time in years, on account of the expected contact with mother earth. I shall carry three pair of stockings, a change of underwear, an extra shirt and extra trousers and shoes, and a light sweater to supplement my service one, with several small conveniences. We shall live rough and rather dirty, and the hike will finish much of the outfit.

—It is evening, and I am all ready. The day has been given to sorting and packing, storing my suit-case, getting my berth home, and again sorting, and again packing. For when we tried to stuff into the squad-bag the eight bundles that

we made of our extra belongings, it happened as we might have expected, and we had to discard half of our dunnage. Here is my final equipment.

In my belt, thirty blank cartridges, and in the extra pockets my flashlight, some surgeon's plaster, and some of David's silk patches.

In my pocket the foot-powder which it is my duty to carry as sub-squad-leader. (The other men carry the intrenching tools and the wire-cutter. The corporal carries nothing but the weight of his responsibilities.)

In my pack the usual shelter-half, poncho, blanket, tent-pins, rope, meat-can, knife and fork and spoon, with bayonet. In addition I stuff in an o. d. shirt (it dried today!) a towel, soap, tooth-brush, shaving things etc., a pair of socks, and my map.

In the pillow-case in the squad-bag, shoes, trousers, change of underwear and socks, towel, writing materials, sewing things.

In the squad-roll the blankets and sweaters.

Cool weather is certain, and having heard that the captain may send back for our coats, we who have bought ours have deposited them at the store-tent for this purpose.

My map I have at last finished with much clumsy care; dozens of us have spent hours today at the Y. M. C. A., absorbed in this work, which with the accurate inking of the route and cross-roads, has been rather minute. The numbering

of many cross-roads is very significant of the skirmishes that await us.

The mail follows us; the address is unchanged.

Tonight the Y. M. C. A. is full of men sending last letters home. Several have dropped out of the company, on account of feet or knees or digestion, or else from natural business reasons. The company is sad to learn that we start without Loretta, business calling him home for a few days. But we shall be glad to see him when he comes.

Today I ventured something, the results of which, if there are any, I suppose I shall never know. Our two officers have been very much on my mind. Pendleton has been his usual self emphasized, very much on his job of receiving the equipment, extra clear and precise, more subtle and more distant in his little ironical smile. The captain, also busy with the equipment work, was surprisingly gentle, patient with all our many blunders, very quiet spoken, and somehow closer to us. But while he attended to us so carefully, somehow I felt that he was thinking of something else.

Now last night Pendleton, I thank God, could not have seen me at the portieres, nor could Vera. But the captain might have, for he faced my way; surely he must have seen the curtains open. If he recognized me, I know he must have thought of it today when, the last of the men gone, and his tallies all made up, he stood up from the table that had been placed in front of his tent, just

as I came along by. We were entirely apart from the rest; so I, having thought a good deal on how far I could venture, took my chance to speak.

I had to be quick, or he would have stopped me. Said I: "Miss Wadsworth doesn't live down to her theories, captain. Certainly she didn't do it in my case."

Then, saluting, I was off. By the gleam that had sprung to his eyes I knew that he understood me, even though he said nothing. For of course he has been wondering whether after all I have a chance with Vera, and has been weighing his earnings against mine.

Dreary business, this love making. Lucky I'm out of it.

DICK.

VERA WADSWORTH TO HER SISTER FRANCES

Plattsburg, Monday the 25th.

DEAR FRANCES:—

In spite of my trying to stop it, it has happened.

He came walking in yesterday evening, when I was all by myself in the parlor. I have told you, you remember, that one of his qualities is a strange gentleness. He told me, in that manner of his, that he would take only a minute of my time, and while I sat perfectly tongue-tied before him, as if I were a schoolgirl, this is what he said, without any passionate declaration, or any self-assertion.

"I came last night, Miss Wadsworth, to tell you that I loved you. You saw it and stopped me. There seemed no answer to you then, but I have found one now, and I think you ought to let me say it.

"You said that a man ought to be able to offer to a woman the best that there is. I came to offer it. Our army women serve their country, not as we men do, yet they do serve the flag, and unselfishly. There is really nothing better that can be done by man or woman.

"There is only one other thing that seems to me worth while. It makes the cottage the equal of the palace. I brought it—honest love. No true woman can ask more."

Then he went away. I could not stop him; could not try to explain. How could I say anything against those awful words? Besides, he spoke with such a thrill as if he were showing me his religion. A dreadful simplicity of belief! I know all his words by heart. All night long I have been saying them over and over; and when this morning I heard the drums, it was as if they said them too.

Do come quickly to your

VERA.

Private Godwin's First Hike Letter

West Beekmantown, N. Y.
Monday the 25th, 3 P. M.

Dear Mother:—

How glad I was, at the end of today's hike, to march into the big field (where the cook tents already stood with smoking fires before them) to have the two halves of the company line up facing each other, and to hear the captain command, "Form for shelter tents!"

The file-closers scurried round and got into the vacant places. Every man gave an anticipatory hitch at the pack that had gradually grown so heavy; and the front rank men, if they thought the captain was not looking, loosened their bayonets in their sheaths.

"Take interval, to the right and left!" We rear rank men stepped four paces backward.

"Harch!" Both ranks faced away from the cook tents, and the lieutenant began to count, "*One*—two—three—four—*One*—two—three—four!" and at every *One* a pair of men, front and rear rank bunkies, stepped off together, till the whole company was marching by pairs, at intervals of four paces, and the captain thundered orders to the guides to march straight.

"Halt!" And halting, we faced inward to what was to be the company street. I unclasped my belt.

"Pitch shelter tents!" Out came the bayonets of the front rank men, and were thrust into the ground at the right heel. Then down with the rifles, off with the packs, and we on our knees were hastily opening them and dragging out the shelter-halves, the pins, and the ropes. Bann and I laid the long sides of our halves together, lapping the upper one away from the wind, and buttoned them along (how glad I was that we practised this yesterday, found where a loop was missing and some button-holes torn, and made everything good!) The ropes were tied in the loops, Bann's rifle was stood beside his bayonet, the muzzle beneath the front loop; we aligned our sloping ridgepole at right angles to the street, drove in our front and rear pins and tied the ropes, and then I, creeping into the tent with my bayonet in its sheath, set it upright under the end of the ridge. Then quickly we pegged down the sides and back, stretching them well out, laid back the front flaps of our kennel, set our equipment in the double doorway, passed the inspection of the lieutenant, and felt proud. Then mess, with its stew and its vegetables, its bread and butter, and even with milk, which we are warned we may never see again. Since when we have been retrospecting, doctoring, washing at a poor apology for a brook, and making ourselves comfortable in anticipation of Retreat and of the night.

Remarkable things, these shelter tents, just broad enough at the front for the shoulders of

two men, and at the back for their feet, with a further recess for the equipment. Along the edges can be stowed the toilet articles and such things as need to be handy, with the spare rifle. After removing all boulders from the floor, and digging hollows for our hips, we have carpeted with straw, bought of a thrifty farmer who hauled it here and sold for twenty-five cents per poncho- or blanket-load. We now know a little better the meaning of the term buzzard. On the thick layer we have made our beds, some of the fellows' together, but Bann's and mine separately, for I have warned him that I am a restless sleeper. On my tummy on my sleeping bag I am writing to you now.

We have already discovered that since we must have our rifles for Retreat it is wise to have poles for our tents, and so they have mysteriously appeared from the neighboring woods. They will travel in the blanket rolls from camp to camp. Should I come again to Plattsburg I shall get a broom-stick for the hike, provided with conveniences for hanging socks, tooth-brush, and candle-socket. Fellows are tying candles to their poles with string, convenient enough till the string burns and the candle tumbles down into the straw.

I can imagine difficulty in pitching tents under other circumstances than are provided by this ideal afternoon. In the rain we shan't care to have the tents face the wind, nor shall we enjoy setting up tents in a gale, when we shall also hope

for better holding ground for the short tent-pins than we find here in this gravel. As it is, we have piled stones on the pins today. Some fellows have ditched their tents, but Bann and I don't see the need of that except with more of a threat of rain than is given by this cloudless sky.

Now if you can imagine in a field, sloping gently to the west, some four hundred and fifty or more of these pup-tents, with a thousand men or less swarming around and in them, some coming back from a bath in the brook, some cleaning guns, some making fireplaces for an evening fire, some napping, some writing; if you can hear much talk and laughter, the chopping of axes at the cook tents, the call "Corporals, come and get your mail for your squads!" then you can understand what a lively, busy place this is. Just across the fence is a camp of cavalry; there is a squadron in our field also. Running across the heads of the streets are the big cook tents; close by are the tents of the Y. M. C. A. and the Exchange and the photographer; elsewhere are the officer's big conical tents, each with the luxury of a stove; and in still another spot is the doctor's tent, not far from the shelter-tents of the band. Men are idling everywhere, and working everywhere also. The long line of trucks is drawn up not far from the field entrance, and the drivers are tinkering them for tomorrow.

But outside the sacred enclosure of the camp, yet as near as they can squeeze, are the buzzards,

each with his little outfit for following the hike. A scrawny horse, a little tent, a board on two barrels, a big sign—these with indigestibles constitute their outfits. In the camp wander men with baskets, or boys with boxes, selling fruit, tobacco, and chocolate. There are the farmer folk, too, gawking about at the show.

—And now, sitting on the ground near the bright lamp of the telegraph table outside the Y. M. C. A. tent, while a dozen others crouch in the radius of its rays, I am writing these last words. Night has fallen. Inside the tent men are almost solidly crowded together on the floor as they sit to write letters, while yet men in a steady stream step over and among them, to get at the table stamps, pen and ink, and paper.

The day of course has been crowded pretty full. This morning at Plattsburg the confusion in the company street was great. As we had to make up our blanket rolls before breakfast we had to put our sweaters in and shiver in our shirts. Packs were made up, tents were policed, cots and mattresses handed in, and then we were off, as the advance guard of an army camped at the post. But today's problem, though explained by map to us at conference this afternoon, did not affect H company. Our battalion was only the support; the first battalion carried on the necessary skirmish that cleared the road of the cavalry, our opponents. While they were chasing them far from the line of march, we plodded safely

along the macadam, and pitched tents before the others.

Concerning the hike, these facts. My feet are unblistered, though at one rest, being panic-stricken, I hastily filled stockings and shoes with foot-powder. At another time I found the pace telling on me, and was sadly thinking that I was still too soft, when I heard grumbling all about me. The step had been quickened, and all were feeling it. At the grumbling Corder turned to me a face of relief. "Thank Heaven!" he said piously. "I thought I was growing old." Our route was through the edge of Plattsburg, along some miles of highway, and then by gravel roads to this camp near Ryan's Grove, which is a fine sugar bush on the hillside below us. After only eight miles of road, there were very few of us that were not glad to get here.

Our system of serving food is curious. Each man has knife, fork, spoon, canteen cup, and meat can. Falling into line at the bugle call (in no order, every man for himself) the knife, fork and spoon are stuck into a legging, and perhaps, until we reach the serving places, the canteen cup is also carried there, by the handle. The meat-can is an oval sauce-pan with a shallow top, over which shuts down its folding handle. Opening this, one carries in one hand the can and cover, in the other the cup, and filing past the cooks, who stand in line, one receives from each some part of the ration. Then we retire to the most

convenient spot to eat, if we are hungry come for a second helping, and if we are lucky, get it.

Of the dish-washing, since I know your passion for cleanliness and absolute sanitation, I spare you the details, except this significant one. The cooks having retired for their own meal, I saw one fellow wash his meat-can in the abandoned coffee barrel, mistaking its fine rich contents for the dish-water.

You should have seen our field at the coming of the dusk: the dying sunset, the silhouetting of the upper tents against the sky, the coming out of the many fires, and in the light of their flames, reflected in the drifting smoke, the lively picturesqueness of the camp. This is all accentuated by the dark. Such coming and going, such talking and greeting, such stumbling in the shadows and peering against the fires—well, I never could have imagined it.

I must turn in, though with regret at not being able to buy myself a knitted cap for the night, against this sharp cold. The felt hat will suffer by such use, and besides will serve badly. Love from

DICK.

Postscript. A rumor is running through the camp (we are specially warned not to believe rumors, but this one is borne out by the behavior of the officers) that someone in the regiment has a clip of ball cartridges, "swiped" from the range.

The officers went down the line at Retreat, and besides inspecting the guns, made every man turn out all the pockets of his cartridge belt. Nothing found.

Private Richard Godwin to His Mother

West Beekmantown. Tues, Sept. 26.

(The first section of the letter is a mere scrawl.)

Dear Mother:—

It is early dawn on Tuesday, and I have slept better, on "my pallet of straw," than many a time in my bed at home. The cooks have for some time been stirring, as I have known by the sound of their axes, the crackling of their fires, the glow reflected on their tents, and their occasional voices. In the cavalry camp the horses stamp, I hear a distant train and a dog's bark, and nearer at hand, from among the pup-tents, come little morning coughs. My writing is practically invisible to me on the paper. I can just see that I trace a line.

There are thistles in this straw!

Last night I saw a lost soul. Rousing, as I often do, at one o'clock, I stood at the door of the tent, admiring Orion in the east and the constellations overhead. I heard a little murmur of complaint, and saw a man come stumbling down the street, his bare feet softly thudding on the stones, and drawing from him this sad sound as he came shivering along in pajamas. He was stooping at each tent and peering in to discover his lost place. So he passed out of my sight,

but when I once more turned to admire Orion I saw the same unhappy phantom wandering along the next company street, still stumbling, still shivering, still silently searching for his couch. As for me, I turned in again and slept.

(Later, and more legible.)

We have broken camp, all the tents being struck; and next we have been given a lesson in military neatness. Each company has had to police its street, to fill all tent-ditches and fireplaces, and to pick up each bit of rubbish and scrap of paper. Our squad having had a meeting upon the subject, has agreed that immediately upon making up our packs we shall police our own ground, either bury the rubbish in the ditches or burn it in the fire, using if necessary a little of our hay, and pile the rest of the latter as quickly as possible, to get the work over with. This is in response to the captain's latest, for finding a single scrap of paper as big as a postage stamp in the street, he turned out a whole squad to pick it up. Next time, he says, it will be a platoon. We know Kirby too well by this time to suppose he doesn't mean what he says.

I am writing as I loll on a pile of hay, while my neighbors are vigorously resenting the demand of the farmer who sold us the hay last night, that we rise and relinquish it to him—in order that he may sell it again tonight. Much angry computation as to his profits per ton, and a warning that, as on account of our ignorance he

raised the tariff on us yesterday, we should never again pay more than ten cents per tent.

(As we stand waiting in rank.)

Orders for today have been issued. The enemy cavalry and machine guns are at Sciota, some miles north of us. We are to go against them, with our battalion as advance guard, Company I in the lead, our company supporting them four hundred yards behind.

(Resting on the road.)

We have been marching at hot speed, having no one to set the pace for Kirby, now that at last we have passed I company. For a while we had to wait on them while they drove the enemy, hearing their firing, and at every halt sending out patrols. At last we drew near the firing line, which had been pretty hard at work, but which drew aside by the roadside (being either dead or out of ammunition) to let us go by, while we acclaimed them as having died heroically in our defense. Then came urgent work on our part, till now, as we halt, the platoon leader is telling us that we are to go forward over a wire fence, deploy behind a stone wall, and wait for the field battery to shell the enemy.

—And now we have crawled through the wire, and are comfortably watching the lieutenant of artillery while, with his instruments all fixed, he is getting the range of the enemy, these, you know, being the cavalry, who every day, I suppose, will precede us out of camp and try to make it

lively for us during the morning. A voice asks, "Where are the cavalry?" and someone answers "Intrenched," which is not so foolish as it sounds, they being equipped for the purpose, and being drilled to fight dismounted. But intrenching should not be necessary in a country provided, as this one is, with stone walls. Other companies are deploying on our left, and we wait before that most dangerous of all attempts, a direct frontal attack. The enemy, the captain has just explained, is a half mile away across a slight depression. At Bunker Hill our men waited till they could see the whites of the red-coats' eyes. At Fredericksburg our attacking men were helpless at a hundred yards. But here as soon as we have crossed the wall we shall be exposed to a deadly fire, not only of rifles, but of machine guns. Of these the enemy have two on motor tricycles, and it is understood that the call of their sirens is a signal that they are in action.

(And again resting.)

We have the machine guns, mother dear. The cavalry got away, all but three or four of them. This was how it went.

When the field artillery had sufficiently pounded the enemy (and having but few rounds this did not last very long) we were given the order to advance. First we went over the wall,—and you must remember that every fence in this country, stone, snake, or otherwise, is decorated with barbed wire—and formed our line, lying flat, a

couple of rods beyond it. Now we put in practice for the whole battalion the tactics we had studied by platoons, sending men forward from the right by squads in rushes, making a new line by degrees, always keeping a constant fire on the enemy—for we had a hundred rounds today, so that if we were decently accurate we should make him too nervous to be very dangerous in return. We went about fifty yards at a time, our sergeants and platoon leaders in the rear, behind them the captain and his orderlies and behind all the major and his aides. Certain officers with white bands on their arms, who ventured unconcernedly into the line of fire, I made out to be umpires judging this game of war. For I find, mother dear, that this is earnest for the officers as well as ourselves —we and the enemy have maps, we know the general conditions, and then each acts as in time of war, trying to get the better of the opponent. So that if an officer has properly trained his men, and if in addition he shows good judgment, then he can feel that he is advancing in his profession. The major, working for the first time today with a battalion under him (for last camp he was but a captain) was as keen at the work as if real bullets had been flying across the little valley. Meanwhile the umpires, studying the strategy of both sides, are themselves learning.

Well, we got forward rush by rush, firing as we lay waiting, getting ready at the word, and then following Bannister as he quartered forward to

the right or left to join the new line. As we neared the stone wall behind which the enemy was firing we could see his white hat-bands, when to my disgust along came an umpire and ruled out the rear rank. Wanting to be in at the death, I changed places with Corder, who was "all in," and so I finished out the final charge, when the captain came through the line with a rush and we up and followed him yelling. The enemy very obligingly vacated the wall as we approached, and all we saw of the cavalry was their dust as they departed, except a squad whom the umpires called back.

One machine gun I did not see, nor have I heard how it was captured. But one was stalled a little distance behind the wall, and I followed the captain as he made for it. The two men on it were swearing wonderfully, being regulars; the captain snapped his pistol in the air as he ran, and I likewise fired my gun upwards, it being the rule of this campaign neither to fire nor to present the bayonet at close quarters. Seeing they could not get away, the men were actually ready to fight, and I think had we been rookies we might have had to scrap for it; but seeing an officer they saluted and sullenly submitted.

(In camp near Crossroads 75, south of Sciota, N. Y., Tuesday evening.)

I am sitting on a piece of canvas, being one among a dozen or more men outside the Y. M. C. A. tent, all writing. Men constantly

come between me and the light or step on my outlying portions; there is much cheerful talking and laughing, and all about is the usual bustle of the camp.

We arrived at camp late, as battle-scarred warriors, and found the peaceful first battalion already encamped. At once we pitched tents and then hastily fed; at home, after hours of such exertion, I should have had a half hour's rest before eating. But the food was ready and hot; if I did not take it at once I could not get it at all; so my stomach took the risk, and I had my meal first and my rest afterward. Then a wash in oh! such a soft-bottomed sluggish brook, where many shaved, and others to my amazement cleaned their teeth. For that ceremony I keep my canteen water, which is served out to us at the head of the company street in proper dippers by orderlies; it is all I shall have, I foresee, both for drink and for absolutely necessary washing. We have better holding-ground for our tent-pins tonight, but the sky is cloudless and again we have not trenched. There are northern lights—a change in weather? The hay today cost but ten cents, and the adjutant assures us of that tariff in future.

Imagine the camp as yesterday, and me well. Love from

DICK.

EXTRACT FROM THE LETTER OF ERASMUS CORDER, ASSISTANT-PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH, HIGH PRIVATE IN COMPANY H, 10TH TRAINING REGIMENT, TO HIS WIFE. SAME DATE

. . . Instead of yesterday's steady marching, with the first battalion driving the enemy away for our convenience, duties were today reversed, and our battalion took the advance-guard work, ending in a very bloody skirmish, in which, I regret to report, one dear to you was slain. We marched—and it was marching!—at a good pace after the first few miles, having no one ahead to hold us back except when we had to duck into the roadside ditches to avoid machine-gun fire. Our advance guard had died gallantly and cheered (jeered?) us as we went forward to dislodge the enemy. The problem was explained to us: the enemy was 800 yards ahead, having command of a shallow valley, which we must cross. This we did by rushes, squads or platoons at a time, three companies abreast no sooner achieving a new line than they sent forward more feelers. In this action it was very interesting for a time to simulate real firing, shooting with blank cartridges at an enemy behind a stone wall.

And yet shooting from behind hard heaps of stone, or lying on rough ground, through grass and leaves that obscured the sights, all the time troubled by a heavy pack that burdened the

shoulders, poked the hat over the eyes, and hampered the free action of the arms, began to wear on me. Try as I may, I cannot master the little sidewise shift of the pack which the captain showed us, and which Godwin says makes shooting prone "just as easy!" Looking at the other men, I often saw them flop on their faces to rest; they were working as hard as on the range. The pretense of firing, when our cartridges were gone, took away some of the excitement. Then at about the fifth dash, which the others took with some briskness but which I had to finish at a slow jog, I began to get pumped. When the first sergeant asked me how I was I told him that I was shot through both lungs. Nevertheless, I finished (though at a walk) the next to last charge, but our dash had been so exposed that, by the time I had thrown myself panting on some particularly jagged stones, an umpire came along and announced that all rear-rank men were to fall out, of course as being dead. Godwin was disgusted, and evidently seeing my envy in my face, swapped places with me. Never was anyone so willing to be killed. Quite at my leisure I watched the spirited advance of the thin line of o. d. men to storm the enemy's position. And I was perfectly willing not to be killed twice.

Our little club of middle aged men still holds its impromptu sessions, members comparing experiences and solicitously inquiring as to each other's condition. So far as I can see we are

keeping up pretty well, except for the ability to make such awful repeated dashes as today's work required. And even then a few minutes' rest sets us on our feet again.

Pitching the tents, making camp, etc., is now routine work. The encampment is as picturesque as before. Tomorrow night we also spend here; whether or not we shall mercifully be permitted to leave the tents pitched, the morning will decide. But I am well, and blisterless, and refreshed, and tomorrow shall be ready to die again.

Lovingly,

ERASMUS.

From Private Godwin to His Mother

Sciota, Wednesday the 27th.

Dear Mother:—

You need not worry about my sleeping warm. When I go to bed I take off my shoes and leggings, put on an extra pair of socks, and crawl into the bag which each afternoon I make up afresh by pinning the folded blankets together with the biggest safety pins you ever saw, and buttoning my poncho around them. Over me thus there is the poncho, and as many layers of blankets as I please, up to five. Besides I have two sweaters, if I need them. So I sleep snug.

This morning it is pleasant and windless, as I wait for the order to start.

An instance of the change of orders under which we labor. (As I recall the Civil War memoirs that I have read, it seems to me that conditions are much the same.) We were assembled in line at 5.25, reported, stacked arms, and were ordered (remember that we are to camp on this same ground tonight) "Strike tents and make packs. Make up blanket rolls and squad bags, and bring them to the head of the street." Oh, the disgust! The orders were proper for the first battalion, which marches on to Altona today; but for us it seemed needless. But the promptest fell to work, took down their tents, and began to make

up the packs. Then the word came travelling down the street, "Leave tents standing!" Luckily Bann and I had not got to the work of striking the tent, and so we jubilated while some others cussed. But we went on with making up the rolls and bags. Then the order was transmitted, "Leave blankets and extra kits in tents!" Perhaps someone blundered in the first place, and we got the order intended for the first battalion. And I do not complain, for today we travel light, with many things not in our packs.

The call has come, "Squad leaders to the head of the street." That means a talk preparatory to setting out. So I have put on my pack, so as to wait without worry. Having marched very dry yesterday, and a pebble which I hastily scooped up proving large and rough, I have provided myself (per one buzzard) with a package of chewing gum. Oh for the old-fashioned spruce, with no sweetness or artificial flavor!—The first battalion, having packed entirely, is assembling for the march. My map is buttoned in my shirt, for consultation at halts. The day is warm, with the wind from the west; but there are gathering clouds, and I am going to use the time which is left in digging with my bayonet a ditch around the tent.

(In West Sciota? At any rate, an inhabited crossroads.) I am lying on my back in the wet grass, while the captain explains that the sound at a little distance, as of a lot of carpenters nail-

ing at the boarding of a new house, is our patrols firing at a party of cavalry that is opposing our advance.

We left our tents buttoned, and started out in gray weather. I was glad that I had, with bayonet and fingers, dug a shallow ditch along the upper side of our pup and across the front, when this light rain began. It is not bad, and so long as I have my pack between me and the ground I cannot get chilled. Again and again I have used it so, and have seen fellows at halts napping all around me. Truly the pack is a life saver.—"Fall in!"

(North of Sciota, on the road to Mooers, near crossroads 79, the weather now dry.) We are resting after a skirmish, and as my position is somewhat more comfortable, since I am lolling in a ditch instead of lying on my back, perhaps these jottings will be more legible than the last. The skirmish went thus.

We left our resting-place at crossroads 72, and followed the popping of our advance guard, I company, while at the same time we heard at a greater distance the heavy firing of the first battalion as it fought its way westward toward Altona, we ourselves going north. As we advanced beyond a corner, suddenly fire from the left broke out upon the column behind us. At once we were halted, and Captain Kirby, ranging down the line of the company, picked out our squad and sent us at the double over the fence

and into the field north of the road that we had passed, our enemy being in a thick wood to the south of it. Here we streamed along, poor Corder as usual soon being pumped and dropping behind, while eager David was only kept from outdistancing the rest by a sharp word from Knudsen. We scrambled through a wire fence, then in a pasture with scattered heavy cedars we assembled behind a tree to survey the ground, all of us pouring out our advice upon poor Bann—to go to the road, to go further west, to plunge into the woods and attack the enemy by ourselves. This last from David, who is keen at every fight. Someone urging to send a message back to the captain, Bann got out the brand-new despatch book and pencil which since the conference this morning had been sticking out of his pocket, but put them up again for lack of something definite to say. So he took us across the road and into the field behind the enemy's wood, where it being evident that the foe had no reserves, Bann began once more to write.

Now we heard Kirby's voice, who having led the company along the road, and finding himself plainly behind the enemy's fire, was putting the men, in squad columns, into the wood to search them out. We climbed the wire fence and followed through the densest undergrowth, where poor Corder, stumbling behind and having to protect his glasses, often found himself quite out of sight of the man in front. But we were too

late. We heard shouts ahead, the firing ceased, and when we desperately broke through the last of the thicket and found ourselves in the open, there stood a line of men with white bands on their hats (the sign of the opposing forces) quietly regarding us. Rumor said that they were captured, and Squad 9, being first on the ground, was feeling proud of their work. Then the rumor ran that not only was the enemy not captured, but we were killed. Squad 9 was cursing, "not loud but deep," when the captain came along and was passionately appealed to. "We got them," he assured us. "They were firing away from us when we broke through the wood. A single picket on that flank, firing a single shot on seeing us, would have saved them. And besides, we have their horses. Sergeant Barker has just come in reporting that he has the bunch." Satisfied, we marched out to our present resting-place.

The cavalry has just emerged from their unsuccessful ambush, with the two machine guns, and have started northward in a hurry, an umpire warning them, "You have only five minutes before we start after you." The men around me are laughing and talking, well content, and I have just seen the major congratulating the captain on a brisk piece of work.

(In camp again, and settled for the night at our old tents, the weather having cleared.)

A cavalryman (by the way, there was pointed out to me today the fellow with the broken jaw,

jouncing along with the rest, and looking neither thin nor pale) a cavalryman has just settled down to discuss the skirmish with us. "We got some beautiful shots at you fellows. In our first position we let the point of I company walk by, and then fired into them at about fifty yards. I company drove us, and then we settled in that little wood, with the machine guns. I company's flanking patrol came right up to the edge of the woods without seeing us. We let them go by and then fired into you. Didn't you duck into the ditches quick!" He is talking now of a cavalryman's work. "Here you fellows are grumbling because you have a gun to clean. I wish I got off as easily. I have my gun and my equipment; it takes a lot of time, and today I had to clean and water two horses, another fellow's and mine. The other man got hurt, one of the regulars. His horse fell on him."

The major, at conference, told us that he and Captain Kirby had been expecting an attack at that point, as the lay of the land was right for it. They were surprised when the flanking patrol found nothing.

Our next work was quite different, and illustrates the fact that the man in the ranks can only tell what he sees, and often cannot understand that. On our fresh advance northward our company was the advance guard, I company falling to our rear. The first platoon marched ahead as the "point," with communicating files,

and we watched its operations for a while as we followed along.

The work of the "point," my dear mother, when you are advancing to engage the enemy, is one of the most dangerous in warfare. When the Germans sent out their advance guards as they overran Belgium, they considered that the men in each point had been given their death warrants. The object of the point, as it proceeds along the road, is to hunt for the enemy and engage him. The men of the detail march at intervals of about twenty-five yards on alternate sides of the road, the corporal about halfway of the squad, and the rearmost, or "get-away man," having the task of falling back as soon as any serious obstacle is encountered, in order to communicate with the support. As in enemy's country the roads are likely to be waylaid, patrols are sent out to investigate any flanking hill, or wood, or group of buildings, behind which a party could be hiding. You can imagine the grim interest in trying to walk into an ambuscade. I company's patrols having failed to locate the enemy in his last concealment, we were particularly anxious to make no such error.

As we marched up each rise in ground I could see the point ahead of us, and the patrols working their way through the country to the right and left of the road. As the point naturally went faster than the patrols it would gradually leave them behind, the corporal or sergeant command-

ing would send back for more men, the message would come through the communicating files, and men would be sent ahead for the work. Patrols outdistanced, and still finding nothing, would drop back to the road and rejoin their command as soon as they could.

After a while this work of the point had used up the first platoon, and began to eat into ours. It was then recalled and our platoon took its place, with Squad 6 as point, Squad 7 providing the patrols and communicating files, and our squad as immediate reserve. Word coming for more men, Clay and Reardon were sent forward, and I saw them despatched off to the right, Clay toward a near-by sugar-bush, a little grove with its sugar house at its edge, and Reardon further forward, toward a suspicious hollow behind which was a railroad embankment which might conceal a regiment. I was plainly among the next to go, and waited impatiently. Then we halted, and remained so for some time.

The men grumbled. Why stop? Why wasn't the support following more closely? Where was the enemy, anyway? Hoping to be right in the middle of the next scrap, we were disappointed at any delay. Meanwhile Clay, having found nothing in his sugar-bush, returned, and attention was fixed on our flanking patrol to the left, who having discovered that we had stopped, likewise became stationary, and leaving un-rummaged the thick little growth of birch ahead of him, sat

himself down in the midst of an apple orchard, and visibly regaled himself on something red.

This was exasperating, we having already had to leave untouched so many trees laden with fruit. Roars from the sergeant failing to dislodge our resting patrol, a man was starting out to order him on, when he was observed to start, crouch behind a tree, make ready to shoot, and then to fall back from cover to cover, continually presenting his gun at an unseen enemy. He rejoined us out of breath, and feverishly reported having heard men in the scrub, and a voice ordering him to surrender. The sergeant was hastily sending out our squad to investigate the birches, when a bunch of men were seen to break cover from them. As they wore no white hat-bands we knew they must be our men; and when they came nearer we saw them to be Squad 9, which a quarter hour before the captain had despatched on special flanking duty, and which, being full of energy, had done their work and more too, coming back after a practical joke on our patrol.

And then we were ordered to return! Instead of the support marching to fill the gap between us, we were to go back to it. Bannister objected that a man was missing, Reardon through excess of zeal having vanished in the distance along the railroad. "Send out a man after him," said the sergeant. All the squad offered to go; Corder was a little the slowest, being leg-weary, but who do you think was first? David! So he was des-

patched, and went very eagerly, while we turned our backs and went south.

When the company had joined the battalion there was much rearranging of disjointed commands, squads continually coming in from detail duty, so that it was plain that between us we had pretty well investigated the whole landscape. David and Reardon were missing still, even after we had rested for some time. We started south again, and it was not till after another march that the lost men rejoined us, David triumphant, but Reardon very hot and weary. Said the poor fellow, "I have thought before now that I was pretty tired, but this beats everything."

There was no rest for him, however. We turned north again, having J company in front, and after a mile heard the familiar firing. The captain sent us headlong into the field on the right, where soon we were part of a skirmish line, and for a minute were blazing away at a fence in front of us, behind which I glimpsed a single white hat-band. But Kirby was not to be caught as the cavalry had allowed themselves to be. Squad 8 was sent off at the double to the end of the line, and there at wide intervals we made a flank guard extending to the rear, where poor Reardon was allowed to rest at last, as we waited hidden behind what cover we could find, gazing across some pasture land with scattered bushes at a belt of pine in front.

As we waited we heard the voice of an umpire;

I snatched a glimpse of him as he stood behind us watching. "Any enemy you see represents twenty-five men." A cool statement that made our task perplexing, for while with one bullet I might slay so many men, conversely if one shot at us first he could wipe out the squad. But though we lay very low and watched very keenly, while the battalion banged away at our left, no one appeared in front of us. To my left was Reardon, and to my right David, very intent on spotting the first foe. It is a pleasure to see how seriously he takes the work. Pickle, beyond him, was constantly chewing gum and whispering slang, the sort of city clerk one reads about in Civil War memoirs, tough physically and mentally.

(I have thrown my chewing gum away. Too much swallowing of saliva makes you (me!) hungry. Me for a pebble from the next brook!)

We were at last called back by a whistle, and the distant cry, "Assemble on the left!" Once more we marched south, and presently were resting again at West Sciota. As we lolled there, buying apples from native buzzards, who take to the extortion of the professional without any coaching, some trucks came to the cross-roads, and men began to climb into them. Watching one group, I was surprised to recognize a man of A company, at the same time that Corder exclaimed, "Those men are from the first battalion!" whose firing, you remember, we had al-

ready heard at least a couple of miles away. We did not get the explanation until battalion conference, some hours later. It seems that the umpires, during our northward march, had reinforced the cavalry with an imaginary battalion of infantry, before which we had been obliged to retreat. By motorcycle messenger a call for help was sent to the first battalion commander, who was now four miles away on the road to Altona. Having sixteen empty motor-trucks, in four minutes he had filled them with two companies, and seventeen minutes later they were behind our lines, forming for our support. As we saw or guessed none of this, it only illustrates the remark with which I began, that the private soldier knows but a little of what is going on.

I would not write this to you in such detail, except that I think it will interest you to see that the hike is more than a mere march, and that it is making every one of us advance in his department of the war game. We squads, I hope, are learning to do as we are told, though you see how blind everything is to us. The intricate problems of the officers come out in conference. There the men sit on the ground in a great three-quarter-circle, grouping themselves whenever possible around the men with maps. The major likewise has hisn, and the officers theirn. The major makes a general statement of the work of the day, and the captains then report on their particular operations. When you see what exact notes they

have taken of every operation: the precise moment of sending out parties and of receiving reports, the minuteness with which they locate every action, the science with which they carry out the work that falls to them, and the team-play that animates them, you see that this is no old-style cut-and-dried "sham battle," but an actual study, of course on a small scale, of fighting seriously carried out by well-trained officers. It has deeply impressed me with the long and hard work necessary to make an officer; and then, turning to the man's side of it, it becomes plainer and plainer that it takes time, much time, to train a private or a corporal into a reliable man on patrol.

One hard thing for us amateurs to learn is the proper writing of messages containing military information. It is hard to decide what is important enough to send, and then how to word the despatch. Tradition from an earlier camp has handed down this model: "The enemy are in sight and are about to do something." Where, when, how many, some notion, however vague, of the enemy's disposition—all forgotten between excitement and too great responsibility.

The march home was the hardest part of the day. The interest of the skirmish kept us going; but the three miles back to camp at a quick pace took it out of us all. I had not known I was so tired; the strain wore hard on me; it seemed ages before we sighted camp, and then ages and

ages before we reached it. But this experience was the same as on Monday, for though the very vigorous ones were able to whistle and sing, to the help of us all, again I began to hear grumbling all about me. We reached camp at last, and poor Reardon when we broke ranks dropped on the ground at his tent door, without the energy to unbutton the flaps, and in a minute was fast asleep there.

We had our dinner, which I put in my meat-can under the hay to keep hot while I rested, then ate and felt refreshed. Then the afternoon we had to ourselves, if you can so consider it when we have to clean our guns, clean ourselves, come to conference, and come to Retreat. For my own part, having yesterday sampled the slimy brook and having no taste for it again, I washed my face and hands (after cleaning my gun) in a little water from the canteen. Thus I am staying dirty. It is no more than I have done before, in the deep woods.

"That was some hike we had this morning," calls Bannister to a friend across the street. Such is the general opinion, especially Reardon's, who slept till he had to be roused for conference. And I want especially to chronicle that it was David who, declaring that Reardon would get rheumatism from the bare ground, roused him enough to get him onto his blankets in the tent; it was David who sat by him and prevented anyone from waking him; and it was David who after

cleaning his own gun, which work the lad does not enjoy, cleaned Reardon's.

The story goes now that the stolen clip of ball cartridges has been found and confiscated. Its location is ascribed to every company in the regiment, including ours. Our blanks we use very freely, being supplied every morning with any number from fifty up. And wherever we shoot them in any quantity, buzzards still flock together to rummage in the underbrush.

You ask the meaning of Retreat. It is the last ceremony of the military day, when the colors are furled. The companies are called together, each at the end of its street, so that they are in order one behind the other. Sometimes we are drilled in the manual, sometimes we have rifle inspection; but as soon as the bugle sounds the warning call we come to parade rest. Then the band plays the Star Spangled Banner, after which we stand at attention while the bugler plays the beautiful "To the Colors." The flag is furled, and everyone not in line, cooks, orderlies, all except the buzzards, likewise stand at attention during the call, and at the end salute. Then promptly we are dismissed and allowed to hope for supper.

Our diet is the same monotony of wholesome, plentiful food. I am flourishing on it; Corder is proud of requiring nothing else. On the other hand some complain, and Pickle, having a sweet tooth, at the end of a meal will often go out and feed himself with boughten pies and doughnuts.

For you must understand that not only do the buzzards follow us from camp to camp, but every farmer's wife along the line of march or near our camp bakes a batch of her favorites and puts out a sign. Those along the road must be disappointed; none of us ever fall out. But they make a good sale outside the camp. David, who has become very strict with himself, is trying to save Pickle from his indulgences, but so far without success except that Pickle has become very sly about slipping away.

A long letter, and I am cramped and stiff from sitting on the ground. When shall I sit in a chair again?

DICK.

Private Godwin to His Mother

Thursday morning at West Sciota,
waiting to start.

Dear Mother:—

The camp has been policed down to the last cigarette stub and gun patch, or anything else that the captain's keen eye might light on. The call has gone out, "Platoon leaders to the head of the street," and the day's work is to be laid out for them. We privates have been studying our maps. For we expect to march to Altona, where last night the first battalion camped, and we suspect that they will march out and oppose us. It is only seven miles by road, but no one knows how long if skirmishing is added.

After mailing my letter last night I sat among others at the captain's fire, listening to his ready answers to the questions which we fired at him. We went over points of strategy, and discussed the day's work. It has become plain to me that there is a great advantage in so small a camp as ours, a regiment of but six companies. We can be in or pretty close to every scrap that happens, and all the real military problems are fairly plain to us. Besides, this hike is to be the longest yet. When further you consider that a month of Plattsburg has as many hours of service as a militiaman gets in two years and a half at home, that our continuous service is naturally much more val-

uable than the militiaman's weekly drill in his armory, and finally that we are under West Pointers who each day explain and discuss the problem, you can see that a man in the Tenth Regiment has a chance to learn a good deal.

Little absurdities are taking place around me. Says Corder, struggling with his pack, "Bann, will you help me into my corset." Pickle says to Reardon (out of David's hearing) "Ten cents for a bum piece of pie that you have to eat with your hands! That gets my goat." And just now has come a hoot from every part of the camp when from I company, in line to start and loading guns for a skirmish, sounded the pop of an accidental discharge. But the men of I company look sour and glum.

Nevertheless I will admit that I discovered yesterday from personal experience, but luckily in the rattle and banging of a fight, how the gun is accidentally discharged. You draw back the bolt and push it forward again, thus putting a cartridge in the barrel. Then you turn the bolt down. Now if in so doing your third or fourth finger strays inside the trigger guard and presses the trigger (and it is very easily done) then—! But no one could hear my mistake in all the firing.

(Resting after battle, near Altona.)

We marched for some miles unmolested along our westward road, and the amateur strategists

among us scanned each rise of ground ahead, predicting fights. But when the row finally began we were too far in the rear to see just what kind of position the enemy had decided to hold. As often happens, we were ordered into the ditch to wait, while the officers consulted briefly, and all the time the rattle of the guns kept up. Half the cavalry, by the way, were with us, and we saw them sent off by a woodroad to the left, supposedly to flank the enemy. Then for our platoon occurred one of our occasional bawlings out. As we waited, having loaded, we saw the 4th, 3d, and 1st platoons ordered over the fence into the field on our right. Being used to seeing the company split into its detachments for different purposes, and hearing no orders, we remained placidly in the ditch—for we are now old soldiers, and are learning not to hunt trouble. But the lieutenant came running, and with a few sharp words deftly removed the scalp of our leader, and retired with it at his belt. So over we scrabbled, and took our place in the column. Then we wandered miles through pastures, woods, and bogs, at first in *column of squads*, which means four men abreast, and then, as the going became difficult, in *squad columns*, which means eight men following each other in single file. Note this difference—I wish we had! At one time, for nearly a mile, the whole company was in Indian file, winding through the underbrush.

And as we went thus there came a curious little

test of character and discipline. For to us as we halted at one charming bit of stony hillside, cedar grown, came one of the amazing persistent buzzards carrying his whole stock in trade, a box of chocolate bars. We were hungry, and some men bought; even David began fumbling in his pocket as the man came near. But he looked at Knudsen, and the Swede frowned, so when the fellow offered his wares David waved him away. Having shown weakness, he did not attempt to influence Pickle; but that worthy, with a sigh, put up his money. "War is hell," said he, and cursed the buzzard. None in our squad bought; in fact, though the captain was not in sight, I think the buzzard was disappointed in F company.

Firing was all the time very noisy to our left, and as we moved on it was plain that we were skirting the centre of the scrimmage in an attempt to take the enemy in flank. Now our squad columns were sent forward parallel, eight yards apart, ready at command to spring out in one long line, the men side by side. Through a cedar swamp we now made our way among huge old trees, the firing very hot and close in front, until we were halted at the edge of the thicket, with an open space in front across which was a snake fence some thirty yards away. As we waited the order to advance, we being on the extreme right, a railroad embankment just beyond us, we saw a platoon rush forward from the left, cross the open diagonally, and line the fence in

front of us. With objurgations the captain and lieutenant coaxed them again to the left. Other platoons, and perhaps single squads, rushed from cover and occupied the fence, the whole line beginning to fire.

We felt sure that it was our turn next, and were saying so, when apparently the order came. The platoon leader sprang out in front, I made up my mind where I was to go, we all surged forward, crossed the open space, and I presently found myself in the line, firing across the fence at a distant wall, the range of which I calculated to be but a hundred yards, and therefore used "battle sight," firing low. But here came the lieutenant again, scalped our leader a second time, and ordered us back. So I trailed back across the open ground and meekly took my place with the others again in squad column. We asked each other, "Weren't we ordered forward?" Some declared that the platoon leader had ordered the advance, others that the lieutenant had sent us out. I knew I had heard his voice, but really I had merely followed on like a sheep. That was proper. But at any rate here was a time when the platoon-leader had made a mistake in keeping us with the rest of the company.

While the platoon, thirty-four men of us, was huddled in its special bunch of trees, all talking and explaining, along in haste came the major, dismounted, demanding if we were in column of squads. With one voice we maintained that we

were, but he or his aide knew better, and by the help of our two sergeants bringing the corporals to their senses and silencing the men, we were finally got out of our squad columns, in which formation we had been so long that we had forgotten that there was any other. In column of squads we were swung to the right, put in skirmish line, and halted below the railway embankment, where the major, with great patience and the most painstaking English, explained to our limited intelligences the exact manœuvre that he contemplated. Then at the word we rushed the embankment, plunged into a ditch, swung to the left, some of us across a wire fence, and prepared to advance and annihilate a bunch of the enemy that we saw before us. But they sending out a messenger, explained that they were dead, which saved us the trouble, not really to our pleasure, for having made fools of ourselves we were anxious to take it out on somebody. And then the bugle blew Recall.

Green troops in battle would cause just such confusion and delay. It was very evident that we had spoiled some plan. The need of a soldier's training would be plain to anyone that heard the babble of our voices in that corner, conjecturing, advising, urging this and that. We are still very far from the state in which we could be trusted to go into battle and obey every order just as it came. The reasons for this I figure out to be two.

In the first place I have learned that the so-

called intelligent volunteer, while able with surprising quickness to master the manual and the drill, with the rudiments of skirmish work, and all because of his trained mind, nevertheless does not readily give up his independence of thought except in the presence of men whom he recognizes as his unquestionable professional superiors. Hence, when deprived of such guidance, each man has his own theory and his own advice, which he voices without modesty.

Secondly, while in the regular army such situations are readily controlled by the— (To be continued. We are going to move on.)

(In camp at Altona, after swim and retreat and supper, writing while crouched in the pup tent for shelter from a shower that has just spoiled the afternoon's conference. Bann is luckily absent; I don't know what two could do in this confined space, except when asleep.)

by the non-commissioned officers, it was very evident today that ours had not sufficient control over us because they had not sufficient control over themselves. They were new to their responsibility, and did not understand how to handle the particular problem. And if we had needed another example of what was lacking, it was at hand in a few minutes when on our way to camp, and seeing the tents in plain view across a stream, the captain decided to save us a half-hour by fording. So he led the way down into the water, the lieutenant at his side discussing, tramped across the shallow river, and marched on, whether

forgetting us or testing us I do not know. The first squad or two followed gamely, the next faltered, and all the rest spread out in confusion and tried to cross dry-shod. I am glad to say that Squad 8 hung together, hopped over quickly, formed and went on. After a hundred yards we came up with the captain, who was just sending back a sergeant with the message, "Help all the girls across." When once we were assembled he gave us his solemn promise never to try to save us work again.

What would prevent such blunders in future? I will admit that in each such case non-coms from the regular army would have steadied us and kept us right. Yet I am convinced that what will best control the Plattsburg rookie is the Plattsburg non-com. All we need is to develop a body of them. The regular may serve at a pinch, but in the cases where moral control is more needed than a little knowledge or habitual steadiness, the appeal comes strongest from a man of our own kind.

I suppose that only the shower saved us from an awful roasting at the conference.

The camp is rather picturesquely situated in a broad field that stretches down to swamps and woods, the cavalry at a slight distance across a little swale. Our squad was on police duty for a while, and I was orderly for an hour. The lady buzzards of the town have spread a chicken dinner, at a dollar a head, in the town hall, and

many of our fellows have slipped away to it. Yet at dinner-time I saw poor Pickle sitting by the water-barrel, a plate of beans in his lap. I asked innocently, "Why aren't you at the chicken dinner?" "Don't ask foolish questions," he snapped. "Can't you see I'm tied here to serve out water?"

I went for my bath down to our little river, which bears the imposing name of the Great Chazy; it wanders idle from pool to pool along its half dry bed. In one of the natural bath-tubs I had a fine wash, finding a pool up to my knees, clear cold water where minnows swam trustingly about, and where crawfish, the first I have ever seen, came like little pink lobsters to investigate my toes. After the stagnant brooks at our last two camps, it was delightful to find this clear water and actually get *under* it.

I was so trustful of the weather that I washed a pair of socks, but I had not got into my clothes before a shower started. I took refuge, with another man, in a cavalry officer's tent. We had a pleasant little chat with him; he did not resent the intrusion of a couple of rookies, and we talked of camp matters. Intermittently it has been raining ever since.

Written by the light of a great bonfire at the Y. M. C. A. tent.

Men are trying to dry themselves on one side while they get wet on the other. Word has come which puts the company in mourning—Loretta is detained by business, and will not rejoin us.

David says in my ear, "Damn him, I meant to get even with him!" This for Reardon's sake, who laughs at David's energy, yet I think is rather touched by it. We have had our usual talk with the captain at the company fire, and rather gently he has pointed out to us our shortcomings, especially our platoon's in giving the major such trouble.

But some men of our platoon came to him with a grievance. In getting us into our column of squads someone swore at the men, and they attributed the profanity to the major's aide, a volunteer like ourselves. This roused the captain. "No one shall swear at my men!" he declared, his gentleness all gone. "I will talk with that aide." That obliged me to speak. "Captain," said I, "I'm sorry to disagree with the others, but as I happened to have admired the coolness of the aide, it doesn't seem to me that he was in a state of mind to swear." One of our sergeants spoke up. "I might have done it, sir. I was a little excited." The man has sworn at us before, and Knudsen has resented it. The captain was mollified by the admission, but he read the man a little lecture. "Never swear at your men, sir. Apart from the fact that it does no good, it's most unsoldierlike. I never swore at an enlisted man but once, when I was a very young officer, and I never will again."

I must stop because of the damp and the discomfort, writing in this flickering light, my legs,

as usual, cramped. I despair of ever conveying a proper idea of this rainy evening, the indifference of the hardy ones, the dejection of the sensitive, crowding together wherever there is cover, trying to keep dry at fires, or in final surrender crawling into their beds, to wait the hours through. It is not raining at this moment, but I am curious to know what the night will bring. The tent is pretty well ditched, but the pin at my shoulder is very loose in this sandy soil, and if it showers—! Good night.

DICK.

P. S. Overheard in I company street, loud language. One disputant: "I keep my feet as clean as yours!" The other. "You do? I have washed mine twice since the beginning of the hike." The first: "So have I, Monday and yesterday. You take care of your person and I'll look after mine."

Private Godwin to His Mother

Altona Camp, Friday, Sep. 29.
Waiting for the start.

Dear Mother:—

The night, in spite of its possibilities, was not bad. I went to bed in the rain, Bann already snoozing by my side, and was put to sleep by the sounds of men's voices murmuring. Roused by a smart shower, I heard Taps blown, and the top sergeant going up and down the street. "Cut out that talking, men!" Waking in the night I found the sky clear, the wind blowing, and two pins out at my side, with the tent flapping. I put the pins in, but when next I was waked by the rain in my face the side of the tent was flapping heavily, and nothing but the fact that instead of a rifle for the tent pole we used a stake, driven about six inches into the ground, had saved us from a collapse. I held down the corner through the shower, then opening my meat-can, used its long handle for a tent-peg. If our little pins were a couple of inches longer this nuisance could be prevented. The new peg held till morning, the clouds then gradually breaking for a glorious sunrise.

On a hillside, near Ellenburg Depot.

We rolled our moist blankets, made up our damp packs, ate our hasty breakfasts, and with

I company were hustled into motor trucks, two squads to a truck. For forty-five minutes we jolted and squashed over bad roads, and finally bowled along over macadam. After eight or ten miles we were turned out, and marched in the cloudy, windy morning three miles to Ellenburg Depot. Here we left a man on each bridge, to notify pursuers that it was destroyed, and turned into the fields, at last climbing a ridge from which, to the left, we saw at a distance a high hill, its wooded sides beginning to show the mottled reds of autumn, while just below our steep slope lay a wide flat bottom, perfect green, with a brook wandering through it. Here we rested, delighting in the view but shivering in the wind, while the company officers and the major looked over the ground. Then the orders were, "Off with the equipment, get out your tools, and dig a trench." The front rank is working like beavers now, and as our turn is nearly here, I must stop this scribbling.

In camp near Ellenburg Depot, Friday afternoon.

Again I sit in the tent while outside it rains. We have as yet been able to get no straw, for though I have twice hurried at the first glimpse of a wagon, the fellows nearer got it all. The ground is wet from this morning's rain, my pen has splashed everything with ink, and I am afraid that this rain is no mere shower. But thank Heaven! the soil is better for the pins to hold in,

the tents have all been faced away from the wind, we have had a most interesting morning, and I have a full stomach. To resume my story:

Considerably below the crest of the hill, and perhaps seventy feet uphill from a railway cutting, a line was marked, and the men fell to at the digging with enthusiasm. The ground was sandy, and we quickly threw out the soil, and heaved out the occasional big rocks. "We" scarcely includes poor Corder, who complained bitterly that his appearance of age made the fellows keep the tools from him; but when we were ordered to bring stones and turf, he joyfully carried burdens. The trench was dug about four feet deep, with an eighteen inch parapet outside. Inside this was a shelf for an elbow rest; the parapet was lined (revetted, the captain said) with flat stones, and finally the whole outside was turfed, so that the raw earth did not show. The turf was from ground opened in a long line higher up the hill, and left open to look like a trench and draw the enemy's fire. Our trench being finished, another —a mere rifle pit, higher up the slope—was made for the captain's observation post, and still another for a northerly outpost. Having turfed the outside of these, we picked the milkweed stalks that stood in great numbers, and set them at proper intervals with artistic irregularity, while for the captain was provided a little bush. I company's trenches were further to the south.

We were finishing, and Corder had just said

"We need a shower to clean this dirty turf," when the shower came. The captain ordered us into our packs and ponchos, and then into the trench. Though the shower was short the wind was increasingly cold, and I was glad of the protection of my poncho. For in that trench we remained for an hour and three quarters, before anything really happened.

I had time to study a good many things. The depth to which grass roots will go in sandy soil: at least two feet. The amount of sand that gets into the lock of one's rifle. The continual discomfort of sand blowing into one's eyes. The cold that strikes up through the stone, or the sand, on which one sits. The personality of my neighbor of Squad Nine, who seemed much less interested in his life as a banker than I was. The incalculable value of the pack as a life-saver, for having to lean against the wall of the narrow trench, nothing but the roll on my back kept me from the deadly chill of pneumonia. But most interesting of all was the behavior of the men.

As we worked at digging the trench we naturally, being intelligent volunteers, had many sub-directors, and much grumbling at so much unofficial ordering. Randall, during one of his rests, delivered himself with much disgust. "There never was an American," said he, "who could take orders. Each man thinks he knows best. We need to learn to obey." Well, once we were down in the trench, it was Randall's head that

was continually popping up, and continually being ordered down; and it was Randall who would light cigarettes, though ordered not to. An hour and three quarters is a long time to wait, and the cramped space was very tiring. Further, we were excited by the sound of firing, I suppose from the driving in of the detachment which the lieutenant had taken off to the east, so of course everyone wanted to see. In addition, our two sergeants, who have none too much authority, were together at one end of the platoon, away from the most impatient of the men, and so were quite unable to control Randall and other restless spirits. Randall, arguing that no one could see *him*, would pop up his head, others imitated, and so on the whole a fine example of discipline our platoon made. But David, lost in wonder at such wilfulness, never raised his head above the parapet.

Well, at last we heard the captain's whistle, and steadied. His voice came: "Range, eight hundred and fifty yards." We set our sights. "At one o'clock, to the right of the cemetery, fire at will!" We stood upright (it was a relief to straighten out!) and I saw, across the valley, beside a little cemetery on the top of the further hill, some moving figures, at which I fired a couple of clips. Then "Cease firing!" We locked our pieces; the men had disappeared. "Down, men!" And we crouched again. But next we heard "Battle sight—at four o'clock—fire at will," and

when we stood up there was a line of skirmishers advancing out of the woods beyond the railway cutting, about where the figure four would be on a great clock-face if spread before us on the landscape, we ourselves being at the six. But while I was popping contentedly away at these men our platoon was ordered first to cease firing, and then to leave the trench and rush to the top of the hill, which we did helter-skelter, none, not even our leader, knowing why.

At the very ridge we were met, slap in the face, by a fierce wind of which we in the trench had as yet got no inkling, which blew our ponchos all about, and savagely drove heavy drops of rain in our eyes. In the midst of this surprise we were confronted by an orderly, who pointing along the ridge, told us that we were to form in column of squads. In which direction we should face, and which squad first, 7 or 10, he did not say. It is easy enough now to see what our leader should have done. He should have said: "Men, get down out of the line of the enemy's (highly imaginary) fire. Now, my good messenger, what are my orders? And meanwhile, my wise privates, keep silence." But nothing of the sort. There we stayed on the ridge, and there we finally formed in column of squads, all the time in full view of the enemy, who might have potted the last man of us. The major at last came to the rescue, got us down from the ridge, and in the hearing of us all roasted poor Jones quite as well as the lieu-

tenant did yesterday. "If you have a brain, sir, don't use it. Stay in sight of the enemy and be shot." Then he sent us by a way I never should have chosen in cold blood, across the top of a steep slope, with sliding sand and loose stones underfoot, while all the time the same wind and rain whipped and beat us unmercifully. At last we were halted behind another hill, put in skirmish line, and told what we were to do. We were to rush the ridge, then to run down to a trench made and occupied by our engineers, while they, being worn out by many days of fighting in it, were to vacate it. We executed the order smartly, dashing down to the trench, the engineers, at sight of us, scrambling out and running for cover. I found myself jumping down into a trench as deep as my shoulder, very finely made. Different from our trench, which was protected from enfilading only by cross walls at intervals, this trench zigzagged; moreover, its parapet was wattled. The engineers must have worked at it from early dawn, unless they brought their hurdles with them.

(There, I have at last got my hay!)

Well, there was but little more. A man emerging on a distant slope, commanding a ridge along which any successful attack must come, I hit him squarely in the middle, only to discover when too late that he was an umpire. Two of our fellows claimed to have shot a buzzard, and contended for the honor. When at last we saw real enemies,

two platoons coming into full view below us, we shot them all to pieces. An umpire told them that they were dead, whereupon they formed in line and went through the manual of arms, to get themselves warm. Then we were collected and marched back, triumphant. It seems that we were told that if we held our line till one o'clock, we won. It was past the hour, and our victory was complete. We marched to camp in good spirits, being especially pleased to hear the major (the opposing major!) compliment Captain Kirby on the excellence of his trench. *Our* trench! We finished two hundred and fifty feet in an hour and twenty minutes. We are told that the trench was quite invisible, even after we had begun firing, and that we were betrayed only by the white bands on our hats.

I have talked with one of the men who was left at a bridge to tell any pursuers that it was blown up. He said that it gave him great pleasure to loll on the railing and watch a platoon ford the cold stream up to their waists.

With great relief I left the ground. We have so carefully policed each camping place that I had awful visions of having to fill in the trenches and replace the sod. But by some arrangement with the owner of the land we left the trenches as memorials of our great fight. How many cows will they trap, I wonder.

Our breakfast was at six, and we had no lunch till two o'clock. Whether we were hungry? In

spite of this settled cold rain, which curiously is from the west, the men are in good spirits, though they show it by yowling at every bugle call that summons them out.

This letter is written up to date, and so I'll close it. Love from

DICK.

Private Godwin's Daily Letter

Cherubusco, Saturday the 30th, evening.
In a farmhouse kitchen, where some of my things are drying, and where I, sitting in a CHAIR, am writing at a TABLE!

Dear Mother:—

Yesterday I said to Knudsen, while David listened, "The trouble with our platoon is that we don't particularly care for our sergeants, and have got into the way of *knocking* them. I've done more or less of it myself. Now it may be no more than they deserve, but it's bad for our discipline and our work. Don't you suppose we could turn about and help the sergeants more? If you should lead in it, it would make a difference in the whole platoon, for I notice that everyone wants to know your opinion." David's face showed that he approved, so Knudsen agreed, and we three talking to our squad and Squad Nine, have started a little Good Government Association. I think today it did good.

Last night was a long one for me. I am still unable to get myself a woollen cap, and though I used the felt hat for both the cold and the rain, it rolled away at every excuse. To keep out the rain, I had laid my poncho on the windward side of the tent, buttoning it along the ridgepole; but it slapped a good deal of the time. The entrance-

flaps, which some of the fellows always button, I had open for the air, and they thrashed all night. Beside me Bann slept like a child; but I was pretty damp when I went to bed, the rain and the wind came through, and every little thing waked me. Twice a peg pulled out, but the tent stood, and I was able to put it in again. So the night was long. Yet I got some sleep, and we were surely better off than our opposite neighbors, whose tent blew down soon after midnight, so that they had to crawl out and set it up in the dark and the driving rain.

There are camp tales of all kinds of hardships. Some stayed round the fires all night to keep warm; some, their tents collapsing, took refuge on a nearby piazza; some talk of washing their faces this morning in hoar frost. But I *saw* none of this.

The yowlings which usually greet the bugler on any unwelcome occasion were absent this morning, for most of us were ready to rise, or already risen. There was at first only a drizzle, in which I ate breakfast; it surely was better than last night, with the steady rain running from my hat into my stew as I bent over it, and cooling as well as diluting it, besides searching out vulnerable parts of my person, which a poncho does not truly protect. Yesterday I set my things down on a wet board; today I stood at the high running-board of an auto-truck, a very desirable position. Yet I thought my hands have seldom been colder than when I stood in line this morning,

unable to give them the protection of gloves or pockets.

In the same drizzle we broke camp, packed our squad-bags and blanket-rolls, and made our packs. It rained as we started, and the whole outlook was bad—for to march ten miles in the wet, and then to make camp under these same conditions, was soldiering indeed.

Yet ten minutes after we had left camp, the advance guard of the battalion, we were staring at each other in new dismay. For pop-pop! Our point had found the enemy. Now for comfort a skirmish ought to be fought near the new camping ground: anticipation keeps us going till the fight begins, and then at the end, weary, we have but a short way to march. This was the deuce! In a moment we were turned aside into a field, and saw the white hat-bands beyond a fence in front. First deployment, then "Down, men!" and flat I threw myself into a six inch bed of clover, as wet as a sponge. From this couch I fired for a while, was ordered up, hurried with the squad forward to a new line, flopped again, fired, and then dashed once more.

For two hours, mother, this sort of thing continued. In a long line our company spread over the fields, now one part advancing, then the rest. Sometimes we were flat, sometimes we might squat on cold stones behind a wall, sometimes we were climbing walls and running forward. Discovering that it was wetter below me than above,

I hung my poncho at my hip, and when we flopped, fell on it. We struck soft ground and formed in squad columns, then came to a place where the enemy was visible in a sugar-bush, across a ravine. Down into the gully I plunged among the rest, and in a confusion of men each seeking in a hurry the best way across, got through two wire fences, forced my way among a growth of alders, and splashed through a brook, luckily no deeper than my ankles. Then up the steep slope, and as soon as the platoon was gathered at the top Jones cried "Follow me,"—and those whose wind was poor began to lag. The enemy was driven from this position, then as we followed him he fired at us again from behind a stone wall, for there were plenty here, with others of all kinds. We drove him again, our laggards helping where they could, coming up to us as we paused to fire and falling down to pant. Poor Corder! Part of the charges he was in, part he had to plod after, out of breath. A minute's rest would freshen him, and then he would keep up for a while. But the pace was hot, until suddenly the enemy vanished. In pursuit, we crossed a wide space with broad flat weather-worn ledges, then came upon soft ground, and were bogged.

The part that confronted our squad was a hog-wallow below a pig pen and nicely full of water from the rain. Light-footed David slipped across, but I, being heavier, plunged in up to my shin. Then came a barbed wire fence, with the wires

so taut that they would not separate to let us through, nor sag to let us easily over. We were helping each other, as is the rule, and the sergeant was hurrying us, as was his duty, when he was answered back by a corporal—not of our platoon, but one who with his squad had become annexed in the confusion. A little back-talk with an audience of silent men; our fellows remembered the new agreement. Then on we went again, stormed another position, and at last, every cartridge spent (my head was ringing with the firing, and rings yet!) we were assembled in the muddy road.

A little interview, then while we rested, between the sergeant, the corporal, and the captain, who demanded the reason for our platoon's delay. The corporal was explanatory; the captain had to silence him. Then the captain praised the company. (He also sent a message to us at Retreat, where the lieutenant commanded—we had done well; he would try to keep us out of brooks hereafter. I like these laconic statements; they mean much.) Then I company, with full cartridge belts, took up the advance-guard work along the road, and we saw them rummage out of a barn some cavalrymen who had hidden there. But soon, the day's manœuvre over, we began the hike to camp. I wish you could have seen it.

The rain was over, though it was still cloudy and the cold wind was strong. The road was a mass of mud; there was no walking in it. We

made two long lines, one on each side of it, and took up our brisk walk. Mile after mile in every footing, through desolate country where the scrub was low, the land slightly rolling, bleak, uninhabited. The road ran mostly straight; as it dipped you could see ahead the two lines of men swiftly plodding on and on.

There was talk at first, and some jokes. "That road looks worse than this," said one. "I wonder they didn't take us down it." The bushes looked very wet. "How about squad columns through that brush?" suggested one. "Try the prone position from the middle of the road," retorted another, as we passed a great puddle. A later puddle, chocolate brown, roused another man's regrets. "I'd like to stop and wash my breakfast kit. I used the water they provided at camp, but this looks better to me." But gradually all talk died away, and we just drove on and on. There were questions, of occasional teams that we passed, as to the distance to Cherubusco. "Three miles," and again after an hour "Three miles!" Well, it was a long hike, nearly two hours, and I am glad to say without halt, for in that wind we should have frozen. But we began to dry off. At last the sight of the trucks and the cook-tents cheered us, and we marched onto the ground where four companies were already finishing their dinner. We had driven off their enemy, and they had marched straight through.

The ground here holds the tent-pins well; the

tent is secure. But I stood in line for half an hour in the wind, cold and ever colder in my poncho, while they let us in driblets into a barn and doled us out hay at high prices. I felt very cross against the good woman at whose table I now write, for not devising a quicker system—though she suffered from it too, for her teeth were chattering as she passed me through. But everything goes by; even while I shivered the wind dried my clothes; and I had cold feet for only a couple of hours, by which time I had dried out a pair of fresh stockings, and put them on with my dry boots. Since then I have been comfortably warm. We had fires, about which we sat; the sun at last came out (you should have heard the shout at the first thin rays!) and we have had a wonderful clear orange sunset, with spruces silhouetted against it, and the early setting of the young moon. Now it is clear and cold and quiet outside, with the northern lights flashing and glowing, violet and white, in cloud-like masses or shifting spires.

Well, such was the day, a hard one in many ways. Says a sergeant sitting by the stove, "I can describe it in two words, Damn nasty." But I am no more than ordinarily tired, and am dry. The hardships of such a day are not to be compared with those of the poor devils in the trenches across the water.

I must close this letter and leave it at the Y. M. C. A., for the call to quarters has just sounded. In fact it is welcome, for I am very

sleepy. I am leaving my wet shoes here to dry. We have just learned, to our sorrow, that we work tomorrow—Sunday! But there is one good piece of news—our overcoats are coming! Much love from

DICK.

Private Godwin's Letter Home

Sunday, at Cherubusco, about 8.30 A. M.
Sitting in the sun, in my overcoat, at the tent door.

Dear Mother:—

After finishing my letter at the farmhouse last night, and getting from the good woman my second pair of dry stockings, I put on everything warm that I had, and went to bed. Fires were burning everywhere, with little groups of talking men around them; but the camp settled down very quickly. It pleased me to hear the first sergeant rounding up men to help in unloading the overcoats; but then I slept, and except for periods when I woke in the night and as usual told time by Orion, I slept sound. The men are all declaring that they slept well, all but one man, who said he was miserably cold, and looks it. It *was* a cold night, with a heavy frost forming even inside my tent, and ice in my canteen when I tried to drink from it this morning. But now, warm and full, I am very comfortable, waiting for the call at 9.45 to go out and inspect the outposts which the first battalion are now setting. The captain has been up and down the street, inquiring how we are; he stopped to speak to me, feeling, I think, less constraint with me than he used.

It was very busy in camp for an hour after breakfast. Men were cleaning their shoes—and some were mourning over them, not having taken

warning against leaving them too close to the fire, when though the leather may not be really burned it will lose its life and crack. Others were spreading blankets and clothes to dry, preparing the short pack (without the roll) for our tour of inspection, recleaning rifles, shaving, mending their clothes. Smoke is now drifting from a hundred fires, and towels and underwear are spread on the tents or flapping from improvised clothes lines. But the camp is slowly settling down into quiet, for work is done, the sun keeps us warm, and everybody is quite content.

I have just listened to the story that Newbold, the corporal of Squad Nine, tells of the fetching of the overcoats. On arriving at camp yesterday, wet through, he found that the new shoes which he bought at the camp exchange in Plattsburg just before leaving for the hike, were too small, and asked the captain's permission to go to the village here and try to get another pair. The captain, after finding out his need, said "You can change them in Plattsburg. Be ready in five minutes to start with the truck." So Newbold found himself in command of a five-ton truck, wallowing through these roads till they struck the macadam, forty-five miles in all to Plattsburg. There he presented his written orders, started the loading of the truck, and went out swinging his shoes by the strings till he found a shop where he could make a swap, the camp exchange being closed. Forty-five miles over the

road again, he dozing in a nest he made among the overcoats, and arriving in time to go to bed at Taps.

The overcoats will keep us safe from now on. But the hard work of the past two days has knocked out a few more men. Hale, who felt the cold night so severely, proves to be threatened with bronchitis, and has been sent in to the hospital. Hageman, with digestion on strike, has to leave us for good. I may mention men to you for the first time, but you must understand that I have acquaintance with a great many now, and when in future I hear their cities mentioned, Kansas City, Cleveland, wherever else, I shall always remember that I have friends there.

—(*Afternoon.*) We finished the morning with some genuine outpost work. The first battalion, going early, set a circle of outposts to the west, which our battalion, going later, had to find and relieve. While it was interesting from a military standpoint, I can scarcely hope to make it picturesque to you. Supposing an enemy ready to drop on us, we had to keep out of his sight while watching for him, and also to ferret out sentry posts which for the same reason had been pretty carefully hidden, and to which our directions were the vaguest. It was all done with thoroughness and care; we had the usual bogs to cross and brooks to jump; we found our men in hollows, thickets, and even in trees; and finally to our joy (for the day was hot and we were most-

ly sleepy from yesterday) we were brought home, fed, and allowed to snooze.

Some of the indefatigables begged for the day and have gone to Canada, which is but three miles away. But most of us are content to loll in camp and rest up, especially considering the fact that tomorrow we are again to be the advance guard. This being for the second time in succession, seems to us something of a compliment, and H company is proud.

I hear someone coming and saying, "Mr. Godwin is wanted at the head of the street." The lieutenant!

(*Evening.*) Yes, it was Lieutenant Pendleton, of whom, by the way, I have seen very little for some time. For we go very much by platoons, as you have noticed; and he having command of the first is out of my ken. But whenever I have seen him he is always the same, very cool, inscrutable, accurate, and busy. His men are devoted to him. Well, he came walking along, scrutinizing the groups, and when he found me, delivering the summons, returning my salute, and passing on with his little smile. As he did not come back at all, I see that he took that method of making his escape.

For when I got to the head of the street there was a big touring car, the captain standing talking beside it, and in it, besides the old Colonel and our old neighbors the Chapmans, were Vera and her sister Frances. Some other officers were

likewise there, and when the visitors descended to walk about, took charge of them. I, a humble private lingering near because commanded, thought that now I might slip away; but Vera in her usual way chose her own partner, and chose me.

The camp did not interest her especially; she had seen it at a glance from the automobile. The way we lived was at once familiar to her; I soon found that she did not want me to explain anything. Knowing that she always has her own purposes, and also knowing that I can never guess them, I waited for her to declare herself. She selected a convenient seat on a stone wall, where we could see everything; every man who went by stared at her in admiration, and evidently said to himself, "Isn't that rookie in luck!"

Her pretence was that she wanted to know about me, so as to write you; but pretences with Vera are very open. Really she wanted to know about the captain—what kind of a man, how he treated us, how we liked him. She couldn't quite bring herself to say, "Dick, tell me about him!" There is always Vera's pride. But after all, there never need be concealments between us; she knows we are to be friends all our lives. So she let me see what she wouldn't plainly say. And I answered quite as plainly: a fine captain, a fine man, the fellows swore by him.

She objected. "He says they hate him."

"Perhaps you never before," I said, "came

across an aggressive man who is modest. I know he thinks that; it merely shows that he can't work for popularity. But he was telling us recently of the practice hikes he has been giving his company in Panama, to show that after all the hardest work is what we shall look back on with the most pride. It was as plain as day to us, though not to him, that the men there are like our fellows here—they will do anything for him."

She dropped the subject; one not knowing Vera would have supposed that she was not even interested in it, but I knew that she had learned what she wanted. Idly she looked down the company street. "What are those men doing?" she asked.

A bunch of the men, growing every minute, had been singing to the tune of Solomon Levi words that were not clear to us, being too far away. "It must be the new company song," I said. "I've been told it's good. The fellows are learning it.—See, they're coming this way. I believe they mean to sing it to the captain!"

Our other visitors were returning, headed by the captain and Frances. The men, grouped by the water barrel at the head of the street, waited till he was near, pushed their leader out in front, and in hoarse whispers commanded him to begin. You must understand that Vera promptly, but without hurry, had got me close enough to listen. He sang the solo.

"One night as I lay dreaming,
Underneath the stars,
The buzzard stole between the tents
To sell us chocolate bars.
The captain took him by the scruff
And kicked him in the seat,
And said 'You greedy buzzard,
Get out of the company street!' "

The delighted men roared the chorus.

"Poor old buzzard, get away out of here!
Poor old buzzard, get away out of here!
For we are Captain Kirby's men,
We neither drink nor swear,
We never wash our hands or face
Nor change our underwear.
We never do a thing that's wrong,
As you can plainly see,
For we are Captain Kirby's men
Of old H company!"

Then, evidently immensely pleased, and laughing to themselves, the fellows melted away in all directions.

As for Vera, she was not daunted by the primitive simplicity of the words. She looked at the captain and noted his confusion, looked at me and made no answer to my question, "Now don't you see they like him?" But she gave me a kindly little push toward Frances, and said, "Go and talk with her. I've brought her all this way to see you." And in another moment she had the captain as her partner, and was making him tell

her all the little things she would not listen to from me.

It was nice to see Frances. She told me all about you, and asked about David; and the street being now very neat with the laundry put away, and my tent not very far, she walked down and looked at it, and met every one of the squad, yes, and knew all about every one in advance, by which I see that you have read her all my letters. The boys were greatly struck with her; when our visitors had gone and I came back to our fire, Clay in his Southern way paid me the nicest compliments for her, and Pickle swore that she was a peach. Then when I thought the subject was exhausted Knudsen came out of a brown study with the remark, "She's almost as handsome as her sister, and besides she's the real thing."

And truly, mother, stunning as Vera is, there's something about Frances's eyes and mouth that is particularly pleasing, don't you think?

There next taking place an Episcopal service in the open air, I went to it. It was under the trees near the farmhouse. A rustic cross was made and set up, there were a few flowers at a simple altar, and the rail was just a piece of white birch nailed up between two trees; nothing could be more appropriate. At least a hundred and fifty men attended; I couldn't ask to hear a better sermon; and finally, the minister giving such an invitation to communion as a man of my free beliefs could accept, I stayed to it. Dusk

was falling as we came away, and we were called together for Retreat.

Troops of the townspeople have visited the town all day, some looking as if they had come from a distance. They have gawked all about, have listened to the band concert, and stood about and watched our religious service as if it had been a show. But the best was at Retreat. The band had finished the Star Spangled Banner, the captain turned and brought us to attention, then pivoted about and stood at attention, looking straight in front of him. A little group of country folk had pressed up very close, and seeing him look so fixedly at something, they all swung about and stared too. Failing to find any unusual object nailed to the barn which was immediately in front, they turned back presently, puzzled or reproachful. When at the end of the bugle call he turned to dismiss us, the captain could scarcely maintain his military gravity.

I finish this at the squad fire, with the fellows discussing the revival of the rumor concerning the ball cartridges. They have not been found; some fool is still toting them about; they are in A company, B company, and so on down the list.

Tomorrow we move on again, my cartridge-belt is full, and I have got everything ready for our early start. The night is clear and cold—but we are hardened to anything now. Love from

DICK.

Private Godwin's Daily Letter

In camp at Ellenburg Center.
Sitting before the tent, on my blankets.
Monday the 2d October, 1916.

Dear Mother:—

The other companies are cheering in the distance, and I suppose I know why. For our company has been spared a great affliction, which would have been very cruel after a hard morning's work. We came into camp a long hour after everybody else, and had just pitched our tents and had dinner when our captain called us together in a close bunch, and told us that the regimental commander had been dissatisfied with the deployments of the other companies, and was having them out to drill; but that our work had been satisfactory, and that in consideration of our hard service on recent days, we were to be excused. You see we have worked hard on Friday (digging and defending trenches) Saturday (when our skirmish work in the mud and wet was the severest, he said, that a company on the hike has yet had) and today, when we started first and finished last. So I imagine that if it was proposed to include us in this afternoon's drill the captain fought hard to have us excused. I hope it's also true that our skirmish work is good. We cheered the announcement and enjoyed our leisure; and now the other companies are express-

ing their delight at being released from their two hours' work in a stubble field.

Last night, after I had mailed my letters, I stood about and watched the camp with its always varied picturesqueness—the many fires, the drifting smoke lit up by flames, the groups here and there, the undertones of talk, the singing. The buzzard song has instantly become popular, and the lieutenant's platoon have a chant of praise to him—I don't know all the words as yet.

"He's on the job, boys,
To find some nice wet moss to lie on,
For today we march
Thro' (dum ti dum) to Ellenburg,
Dum, dum, ti dum dum (here memory fails)
Prepare to rush,
Thro' mud and slush,
God help the man that tries to shirk!"

Besides these there have come to us from other companies, and indeed from earlier camps, other ditties, not vicious but unquotable, horribly amusing *men's* songs.

I gave up watching at last, and made my bed, which was not so easy as usual, since my poncho, being old, has taken to stiffening in its folds after wetting, and when I shook it out, just plain cracked. Besides, its intimate acquaintance with barb-wire has resulted in various tears, notably a long slit and some "barn-doors." So seeing its usefulness departing, I chiefly made use of my

blankets and overcoat, in which latter I slept, and found myself perfectly warm.

Today we were up earliest, packed in a hurry (which never, however, allows leaving the ground untidy) and were off as an advance flank guard to protect the march of the baggage train and main body on the straight road here, we going on a parallel line over whatever country we found. We marched out of camp, went a mile to the west, and then turned south—and a little ripple of joy went through the company. For it was our first step toward Plattsburg and *home*. The men are all looking forward to the breaking up of camp—not that they are feeling any hardship, but that they are anticipating the set end of things, and thinking of home life again.

Today's work will not make an interesting story. We followed our south road till it petered out, passed through pretty glades and around attractive knolls, and finally climbed a steep ascent to where, by a schoolhouse at a corner, we rested for a while. A platoon was sent north against a squad of cavalry; the rest went on, deployed here, deployed there, sent out squads and recalled them, then lay low in ditches and watched the movements of some of the enemy (horsemen and a machine gun) cautiously coming forward along a cross-road against the corner toward which we were heading, and which we knew to be held in strength by our first platoon. They consulted, came on within range, and then sent

out a man to reconnoitre. Reaching the corner, he wheeled and dashed back, waving his hat and shouting. A burst of fire from the corner pursued him; and our Squad Seven, crazy to do something, let off a couple of clips at the men on the machine gun, who were frantically trying to turn it about. The cavalry got away, all but their messenger, who was summoned back. As for the machine gun, it would not reconcile itself to capture till, as the captain said, an umpire went out and picked it by hand.

We were given another rest, this time by an odd-looking building which Corder guessed was a creamery. The fact being established, our boys were greatly excited, and some filled their canteens at wholesale prices—surreptitiously, for the thing was quite as wrong though not so reckless as another performance I have seen, the filling of canteens at wells. If we escape typhoid from such water it will be because of the inoculation.

Ordered on again, our platoon was detached and sent across country to come upon the flank or rear of any cavalry that might be lurking for us. We sent out a squad and lost it; then the three remaining squads went on and on and on, and grumblings became louder and louder as the men began to suspect that the leader did not know where he was going, nor what he was trying to do. Good David, mindful of our pact, tried in vain to cheer the boys up; but no, they would grumble, and (as inexorably follows) made their work the

harder. It was a long three miles over stiff country, with a fence, usually barb wire, every hundred yards—and bogs! "What made me sore," says Knudsen at my side at this moment, "was that first swamp we came to. It was perfectly visible, with a good dry meadow on either side to travel in—but Jones had to bring us through it." Fence, bog, fence, thicket, fence, small pasture with an inquisitive bull (we went across smartly!) fence, rough climb over rocks: such was the order of our going, till at last we heard the captain's distant whistle, and found the remainder of the company resting comfortably by the roadside waiting for us. But there was no soft place for the second platoon, for on we went at once, two miles more to camp, where the other companies had long since pitched their tents, had fed themselves, and now were streaming out toward town to fill in the chinks in their stomachs. The best ice cream, I am told, is at the millinery store.

For the first time since Friday I was able today to get a swim—or rather a dip in an ice-cold stream, below a broken dam. Picturesque, so many men's naked bodies, undressing, bathing, dressing, with the rushing stream, the rocky bank, the overhanging trees. Then I cut my toe and had to have it dressed at the doctor's tent, where I had a glimpse at another side of camp life.

I met one of our fellows coming away grumbling. "My blisters were dressed by an artilleryman who

disgusted me with his profanity, and who put the plaster on the wrong spot." But I was tended, having a more important wound, by one of the doctors. And after my experience I can declare that all doctors are divided into three kinds.

One was a volunteer, one of our own company, by the way, whose feet having given out was transferred to the medical corps, and keeps an especially kindly eye on all H company men. But he being busy, I fell into the hands of the regulars, and had a chance to judge of the opinion common among the rookies—"they treat you like a horse." Now regular officers must be short and sharp with their men, and the doctors among them are taught to be suspicious by the sojering they necessarily detect. It must be a struggle to keep sweet the milk of human kindness.

The man who dressed my foot had succeeded in remembering that the majority of men were neither cowards nor dishonest. He was considerate of me and of the orderlies under him. But alongside was a scowl. A poor fat bandsman with a lame foot was not excused from marching the next day. The orderly who had mislaid the iodine was scalped. The orderly who had charge of the medicine chest was also scalped. The man whose foot this doctor was dressing was so certainly a man of character and a person of civilian consequence that he was not scalped for presuming to turn his ankle; but I felt the certainty that under actual campaign conditions he

would have fared no better than the others. It was borne in upon me that a gentleman who is gentlemanly only to gentlemen is not a gentleman at all.

Though I have not spoken much of them, we have our daily conferences whenever the weather will permit. Today we first had battalion conference, when Major Goring spoke of recent manœuvres—and we men were interested to see that even he spoke of Friday as an extremely successful day, and Saturday as an unusually hard one. Then supper, then bed-making (which is desirable before the light goes—by the way, I am writing no longer in the afternoon but the evening) then regimental conference, when Major Downes spoke against time for an hour (and mighty well, upon the Philippines and army experiences there) in the hope that General Wood would come, which he didn't. Now I am writing while sitting upon a firkin of apples that I had sent from our neighbor Williams, waiting for the squad to come and help me eat them. Very bad writing this, I know, by the light of the fire, holding the paper first folded, then bent, then skewed, anything to stiffen it and catch the light, while every moment I must shift it as I move my hand along the line.

The boys are gathering for a feed—the apples, some honey, bread, shredded wheat, cream from the local creamery (Knudsen's inspiration), the first such feast since the hike began. We have

invited our neighbors, Squad Nine. So, since there is no more to tell, I will close this.

"Pass up your cups," says Clay.

Love to you from

DICK.

Private Godwin to His Mother

On the road to Ledger Corners.
Tuesday the 3d October.

Dear Mother:—

I write on my back in the usual roadside ditch, our column having halted after firing has broken out in our rear. My pack was on wrong this morning, hanging too low, so that the straps cut me; I was glad to stop, so as to adjust it. Usually it is no trouble: in fact in some of the skirmishes I have not thought of it at all except to remark how little it cumbered me.

But the pack can be, I have found, a detriment in case of a fall. Yesterday, going through a boggy wood, with rocks and slimy fallen trees, I slipped and plunged forward. Without the pack I could have saved myself; but the heavy roll, shooting ahead, was just enough to overbalance me and bring me down among the stumps and boulders. To protect my face I twisted as I fell. This brought the pack under me, my head was lower than my hips, the pack wedged in a hole, and I should have had difficulty in rising had not the boys yanked me up.

Our feed at bed time was a success. We were warned of a hard day to follow, the march being extra long, and the road being so unsafe for trucks (on account of weak culverts) that we must

carry our own dinners, which we must eat cold. In consequence we were given this morning an emergency ration, consisting of a slice of Bologna sausage, two pieces of dry bread, and two hard boiled eggs. These we put in our meat cans, with such chocolate as we could get from the buzzards; we are carrying them now, and are wondering if the cooks will get to camp in time to give us coffee.

Behind me, after quiet, the fire has broken out again. The boys listen critically. "We shan't have to go back for that." There is a whole battalion behind us that can stand off any attack.

(*Later.*) The hike today has been steady plodding, halting at the regular intervals, also at times of attack from the rear. At first the boys sang a good deal, new songs and old. But the last two stretches, though we have had continual jokes and laughter, have been a persistent grind. For the first time we have had climbing, pretty steady from our start to the height of land, a rise of 502 feet, after which we stumbled down a very stony track till we reached a better road at Halfway House, an uninviting structure between two unknown terminals. We had one fine look-off at the highest point, over a gently descending slope of miles to a strip of Champlain, and beyond, floating above the haze, the Green Mountains of Vermont. Now we are resting again, the boys talking, smoking, studying the map, and singing quietly.

In camp at Ledger Corners.
At the mouth of my kennel.

The day's hike, ten or twelve miles, is finished, a very dreary performance indeed. The way was very dull; and though the boys were at first inclined to say they were glad not to be on skirmish duty, we having worked so hard of late, before the trudge was over we were all tired of the monotony, and would have been glad of a brush. And we got just as tired and hungry as if we had had an extra four or five miles of cross-country work. At last after passing through a district whose only beauties were its few high views and the gorgeous colors of its maples, and whose general sparseness of people, unattractive fields, and ill-kept houses (chiefly of plastered logs) became after a while depressing, we came to almost the only smooth field that we had seen. The first of the trucks, after its journey of thirty-six miles, was just arriving; nevertheless it was not long after we had pitched camp that coffee was ready, with which we wetted our dry snack. You should watch us veterans pitch camp. Every tent is erected in fifteen minutes at most, less if rain is threatening. I always hurry off early for the hay, leaving Bann to finish pegging down, and to ditch if necessary. My haste saves delay; today I got into the hay-barn just before a quartermaster came and formed a line. I always lug away a full poncho; though the hay almost fills the tent

at first it soon packs down, and I want this amount to make sleep easy, and to make sure that even if rain gets under the tent, we shall sleep on an island in comfort. Tonight the weather promises to be fine, so that Bann did no digging except for sods to lay on the edges of the tent to keep out the wind.

Afternoons are always pretty full. We are said to have our time to ourselves—yes, and if conference on the manœuvres is omitted (as today, when our battalion had no manœuvres to confer about), it really amounts to something. And I have gained time by toughening myself, the rest I used to crave at Plattsburg and on the range no longer being necessary. But I love to linger over the luxury of the swim—or rather the bath—if there is an accessible stream. There was none at Cherubusco, and to tell the truth I didn't miss it, so weary was I, and the weather so cold. But yesterday and today I enjoyed the chance to soap myself and souse. Next if there is mail (and I can always depend on my letter from you) I like to enjoy it and skim the newspaper. After that the rifle should be cleaned, even on such a day as this when I did not fire a shot, for the barrel has a habit of "sweating" which requires it to be cleaned out and oiled. And then hundreds of us fall to on our letters home, always in a public place, with talk going on all about, and with men going by who pause and interrupt.

For in our company, and I doubt not in all the

others, there is the friendliest feeling for each other, and for each other's fortunes. We know that So-and-so has had a sprain, that such a man is in trouble with his digestion, that Hill has a fallen arch, and that Homans has terribly blistered his feet and is these days riding on the trucks, poor devil. Those who have met at the hospital tent have a common interest. Thus getting acquainted, we hail each other when we meet in the street, stop at each other's fires, compare notes, congratulate on recovery, sympathize. There are, too, the recognized jokers, men who are always looking out for a chance to make a hit. And finally camp news is handed along from man to man.

With all this going on, afternoon and evening, a fellow is continually interested and, you may say, busy. There is good feeling almost everywhere, though it is interesting to see how the degree of it varies.

You see this particularly in the solidarity of squads. There is somewhere in the regiment, I am told, a squad that does nothing but squabble; the men have nearly all in turn been corporal, and no one will obey. But mostly there is bound to spring up a feeling of unity, as the eight men sleep and march and manœuvre together. This will differ according to the men's natural sociability or feeling of loyalty, with perhaps jealousy in one man, or officiousness in another. Occasionally you will find a squad whose masterful

corporal interferes too much with his men's personal freedom—and that has to be adjusted by a little plain language. Sometimes a fellow is discontented with his squad; Randall, for example, doesn't feel himself appreciated by his mates, and seeks chums elsewhere. But none of his new intimates stay by him very long.

Our squad holds together very well; we eat together when our tents are not too long a journey from the mess tent, a matter of consequence with a brimming dish, and in general we have a constant eye out for each other's movements. But more than this, we are taking Squad Nine into a little confederation; they are men of the most diverse sorts but very much of a unit, and all bright, witty, and ready to cooperate. Indeed, having a system of fetching each other's hay and filling each other's canteens, they have a better squad organization than we. It has pleased me very much that our banter between the tents at Plattsburg has turned into the friendliest of feeling, so that we naturally seek each other out. We gave them a spread last night, and today are invited to another in return.

The column on the march is an amusing thing. Taken in little, I have got very familiar with the backs and legs of the four in front, Bann's springy tread, Clay's sturdy tramp, the little stiffness that shows in ancient Corder's gait, and the untiring litheness of Knudsen's swing. Beside me Reardon trudges silently, his hat always flopped a

little over his eyes, his head up. Sometimes I make him talk, and have pried out of him much of his family history. Beyond him Pickle goes on springs, cracking jokes like a little internal combustion engine. And David, now very tanned and wide awake, finishes our four. Without looking, we know the voice of each of our neighbors behind or in front, even so far as the witless stutterer some squads ahead, or the flat-voiced constant querist somewhere behind. But now when he raises his song his neighbors shut him up.

Our company in column always remembers who commands it. The first song we begin to sing, and the last we give up, is the Buzzard song, to show our loyalty. Incidentally the song has improved discipline, for yesterday when a buzzard approached us with the inevitable chocolate, tobacco, and matches, we passed him along down the line with the chorus, "Poor old buzzard, get away out of here," though, to be frank, the wording is somewhat stronger. No buzzard will ever get anything out of our company again when on the road, even though we may be at rest. Other little touches show our memory of the captain's injunctions. We have a sergeant who in former camps was demoralized by drilling under other officers, and who at times crosses his gun upon his shoulders as he marches. Then the whole column shouts at him till he takes it down. And when some other company passes us, with men

carrying the guns by the straps, we shout: "Porter! Suit-case men! Red-caps!"

It is fine to march in a column of men and know the current of energy that flows along it. However many miles you have marched, however tired your feet and back and arms may be, in the knowledge that you are one of a disciplined regiment there is something that strengthens you and keeps you going. For in one sense Route Step, when you may go as you please, is a fiction; we must still keep so close together that to preserve the step and the cadence is almost a necessity, and though we carry our pieces at ease, we still swing along together. And as you look along rising ground, and see the hundreds of men ahead, and know there are as many more behind, all going, going, the knowledge that you are a part of that machine, and that to fall out would be to mar it and to cut yourself off from it, keeps you still moving on your weary pins.

You see I am speaking of general things, because of particular events today there is nothing to describe. The bathing today was most shockingly public, on both sides of the bridge in this apology for a town. Whenever wheels were heard, men shouted "Cover!" and those in the water (which was very shallow) would try to get under. But I think the women folk had been warned to keep away, since none of them crossed, at least while I was there.

(*Evening.*) Tonight we have had a talk from General Wood. I have not reported our confer-

ences to you, they are so incidental, and indeed so theoretical at times. But we have had a captain from the border tell us of the coming of the green militia there at the mobilizing of the national guard, of their first helplessness under service conditions, full as every company was of new men. The work of getting this half- or quarter-trained mass ready for fighting was enormously more difficult than our Plattsburg work; and the fact that these regiments, if sent into the field at first, would have been helpless against the Mexicans, needs no explanation (disagreeable as the idea is) to every recruit here. We have at another conference been shown the detail work of supplying our camps both at the training ground and on the hike, and the immense importance of the work of the obscure quartermaster's department. Talk after talk has impressed us with the amount of work needed to drill, to equip, to work into fighting shape, even a few thousand men; and there is no Plattsburg rookie who does not fully understand, and will not in detail explain to his neighbors when he goes home, the absurdity of Mr. Bryan's army of a million men which is to spring into being at the call of the President. It would very much relieve us to be assured that the government is ready to equip them even in the least particular.

General Wood has talked to us from time to time. Back at the training camp he told us somewhat of our military history. You know our text-books feed us up on our military glories;

but looked at through the cold eyes of the statistician we know now that these were achieved at the cost of enormous and unnecessary losses, all from lack of system and readiness. Moreover there are certain military disgraces which need to be called to our attention, to make us resolve that these things shall not happen again. Considering further that we have never yet had a war with a first class military power (with two at least of whom we are in controversy now) and remembering that not only has our national guard proved a failure at this crisis, but that the new enlistments in the regular army have not come to pass, so that it is many thousands below its paper strength, we are now at the point of asking ourselves what we are to do to meet the military necessity which will some day suddenly come upon us. We believe it is coming; no soldier will deny it or can more than hope against it. Therefore we must prepare—but how?

—It is time for our spread; Squad Nine has come not merely with camp delicacies, but with cakes and candies from home! So I will break off this gloomy epistle with, as usual, love from

DICK.

P. S. Still come the variations of the story of the clip of ball cartridges. Someone knows somebody else who found it among his cartridges one morning and slipped it into another man's belt. Thus the clip, and the story, travels.

Private Godwin's Daily Letter

Cadyville, N. Y., Oct. 4, 1916.

Dear Mother:—

We were up today as usual at half past five, those who were lucky rising a little earlier for more comfortable dressing. And yet, after all, ten minutes is enough for those few observances which may be dignified with the name of our toilet. The pint and a half in the canteens allows us a scrub of the teeth, and a rinsing of the face and hands—no more, especially if we are to have anything to drink on the day's march, for the morning, with an empty water-butt, is no time to replenish the supply. Pickle, having a budding mustache, carries a pocket mirror and comb, and so can arrange his hair; but the rest are usually satisfied with a hasty smoothing with the hands—and since the hat goes on at once and stays on, why not? Because of the cold, all sleep in their stockings, which saves morning time, besides preventing bother in the lacing of the trousers. (It is at night and at the swim that stockings are changed.) Thus in the morning only the shoes and the leggings must go on; we are already in our sweaters, and so are soon prepared for the first formation. The cartridge-belt and rifle are dragged out from the straw and laid ready in case they are called for; then one can proceed with packing the squad-bag, and with

striking the tent and separating the shelter-halves. Old Bann is a wise one; he always begins by securing his five tent-pins, and so leaves to me the responsibility of rummaging out the remaining five, of which one always dodges me for a while.

The second call sounds, to be followed by the first sergeant's whistle. "Corporals, get your men out! Belts and rifles!" There is snatching up and buckling, then there is scientific delay over packing, with eye and ear to the exhortations of sergeants and squad leaders; but at last even the slowest are on their way to the head of the street to take their places. The corporals are calling the numbers of their squads, "Six!" "Nine!" "Twelve!" and with anxious eyes are watching for their belated men. The line forms: there is a gap here for a smoking fire, and other gaps that mean absentees. Rear-rank men step forward to fill the places of their file-leaders, and as the assembly sounds the front-rank men are glad to slip, unobserved, into the vacant spaces in the rear. "Report!"—"First squad, present." "Second squad, private Smith absent." Smith, hurrying up, curses under his breath. "Police duty today," he knows, and makes a grimace at private Brown, who has found his place in the fourth squad just in time.

Once the reports are in, the first sergeant orders "Inspection—Harms!" With a rattle the guns are tossed up and opened; with another rattle, at the next command, they are closed and

snapped. The sergeant salutes the waiting lieutenant, whose commonest proceeding, now on the hike, is to warn us of an early start. Then perhaps he orders "Stack arms!" and we grumble. A nuisance to have, in the company street, a line of stacks through which we may not pass. Then, dismissed, we return to our packing, always with an eye to the forming of a line at the cook tent. For no one wants to be late in that line, yet all wish to get forward with the packing. There is, on these cold mornings, another consideration: it is pleasantest to eat breakfast in sweaters, which we know must be discarded for the march. If the officers or sergeants come with "Hurry up those blanket-rolls!" off the sweaters must come, and the rolls are made. Otherwise, at the mess-call utensils are snatched up, and the men hurry to the head of the company street, to form the double line, and to be glad of the extra comfort that the sweaters give.

The meal disposed of and the meat-cans washed (or rather rinsed) the remaining packing is quickly finished. The rolls are made, the squad-bags are stuffed full, and both are carried to the trucks. The packs are made, and the belts, heavy with the fresh ammunition that has just been handed out, are hooked to them. A swing, a boost, a hitch or two, and our pappooses, our constant companions, are with us till we make camp, seven hours or more later. Then the whole company street is policed, and the hay piled in big cocks on

which, in the early sun, the men loll during the last few minutes before the bugle calls.

Our second battalion was first in ranks this morning, drawn close together to hear the words of the major. There was to be, he presumed, a rencounter, or meeting engagement; he merely had sealed orders, to be opened at a certain spot on the route. Our battalion was to start first; he advised all officers to study the terrain as we passed along. And then we were off, while the first battalion was decorating its hats with white, and jeering at us as future enemies.

The trucks were a mile ahead of us; we saw the dotted line of their khaki tops marking the road that led out of the high basin in which lay the camp. As we too climbed the steady slope to the southeast we were willing to leave the dreariness of its unkept farms and get among the woods. Lyon Mountain, on the west, slowly drew its colored bulk behind the shoulder of a nearer hill while we came closer and closer among the maples. The shallow notch over which we passed was high and open; nothing overhung us, but the tawny tapestry of the woods ran up gentle slopes to the right and left, and the few evidences of farming, save for the all-present wire fences, faded quite away. The slope grew stiffer, but there was no slackening of pace. Heads bent low, chests began to labor, and the sweat rolled down. A welcome rest relieved us; then up we started and went on again, at each change of grade looking

for the downward turn, and each time disappointed till—ah, there was a corner, and on the slope beyond we saw the column descending amid dust. Then we too turned the corner, and faced the view.

It was not wide, for the woods by the roadside (brilliant in the sun on the right, subdued in the shade on the left) limited it to a V. Below was the valley, and beyond and above it, piling ridge on ridge, rose the hills, climbing to the shaded blue peak that loomed in the very middle. It was a picture, striking and complete.

In vain I looked for the lake, which in all our earlier landscapes showed between us and the hills. Then a reference to the sun showed that I was still looking in a southerly direction. Further, this great hill, so high and clear, was both taller and nearer than the Green Mountains could be. Someone behind me said "Whiteface," and I knew that I was looking straight toward the heart of the Adirondacks.

Again we made a turn, and the view broadened out. To the east the whole landscape sloped toward the sun, against whose rays the brilliance of the woods faded, though still amid the green one could see, to north or to south, the yellow, the orange, or the dotted scarlet of the flaming maples. The easterly view was less distinct; in the distant blue the hills flattened to a fairly low horizon.

But while, still marching, I idly gazed, my eye

was caught by an odd trick of the sun which, now at nine o'clock well on its upward way, yet seemed to illuminate the bottom of a cloud that hung near the sky line. It was a sunset effect impossible by day, but there was the distinctly gleaming band. And then I knew—Champlain! It was the lake, turning faintly silver further north or further south. What I had thought to be a cloud was distant haze. And above it hung, at first unnoticed, the faint blue silhouettes of Mansfield and its neighbor peaks.

As we marched down the slope my neighbors, mindful of what was to come, said "Gee! Suppose we are to climb up this again?" But apprehension was soon lost in the interest of the town we now entered, whose great buildings (in which each squad threatened to leave its most obstreperous member) had been visible for some distance. Dannemora seems to be a town whose prosperity, in this out of the way place, depends solely upon the great prison that stands in its midst. We marched along beneath the huge wall that forms one side of the main street; it rose in places fifteen feet above our heads. Dust! dust! A school was let out; its scholars came streaming uphill to watch us, and to tag along beside us even after we had turned away from the great hospital of the prison, and were once more amid farms. Other school children were waiting for us along the road. We saw very little of the buzzard in this population; they handed

or threw us apples, and the boys even undertook to fill canteens—the same old trick which the officers failed to detect.

Still we tramped on amid the dust which rose around us; if Saturday's was the wet hike, this was the dusty one. As we neared a crossroad we were given the command "Attention!" So we came to the right shoulder and straightened our ranks, that we might look better as we passed the General. Another quarter mile (we were an hour beyond Dannemora now) and the familiar motorcyclist, our messenger in so many skirmishes, darted by us to reach the captain. We grunted. And then "Squads left—march, company—halt!" We found ourselves facing the wall of bushes. "Prepare to load!" Who, we wondered, would accidentally fire now? Ah, the distant pop was from the next company, and we heard its men angrily jeering their clumsy mate.

Squads-left again, and now we were starting back on the way that we had come. Uphill of course, but we feared that worse was to follow, as we remembered the ridge that we passed some little distance back, and recalled the advantages it offered for defence. To be sure, J Company was now nearest it and should secure it, if the enemy were not too close. But a burst of shooting, not very far away, apprised us that they were already at hand. And then came the expected order, "Double time!"

The pace in double time, say the regulations,

is thirty-six inches long; the cadence is at the rate of one hundred and eighty steps a minute. It is not a run. I have heard the captain call back a lieutenant and his platoon: "I didn't say Run; I said Double time!"—"An easy run," says the little blue book. An easy run! With eighteen pounds on the back, and eight around the waist, and another nine in the hand—an easy run! Oh, in that dust, and up that slope, it was pound, pound, pound, till my heart thumped like the engine of a little Ford at high gear on a stiff grade, and my knees (how well the ancients knew the importance of those joints!) were like lead. The breath was failing, failing—till at last in a burst of relief I got my second wind. But poor Corder! Three times, as I watched him laboring in front of me, he flagged. Three times he visibly mustered his powers and pounded on. The fourth time he was spent. He had already stepped out of the column, to let us pass him, when I heard the welcome whistle. "Halt!" Corder had strength to take his place again, we were hustled into the ditch for cover, and I found a grateful position on the ground. There was no talk; everyone was too busy with a shortness of breath.

The firing in our front was now more systematic, and was spreading to the left. It was not long before we were ordered to the right of the road, and marching in the ditch, went forward. Then double time again, for a short distance, and the

line swung out into the road as it turned to the right into a field. Suddenly there was the major, ordering us back into the ditch, and his eye met mine in the midst of one of his remonstrances. "The road is always unsafe!" Look to yourself, major, I thought, as obediently I ducked aside and left him in the position of danger. A ploughed field brought us to a walk; we climbed a stiff ascent, then found ourselves facing a nasty bit of thick wood, through which we were ordered in squad columns. Down a slope and across a gully and up again; then we went through more open country, but still among trees. Finally we aligned ourselves behind the top of a little rise, where we might comfortably sit or kneel, having plenty of cover behind logs or stones. The enemy that tried to cross the ravine below us would have a surprise.

There followed all the confusion of an attack in the woods. We heard the enemy coming, saw at length the white hat-bands, opened fire, and heard his heavy answer. The firing slackened on our front, strengthened on our right, and our platoon was again detached, to take care of this new danger. As we waited at the edge of a wood, while the major held us for orders, a half-grown robin, with speckled breast, nervously flew about us as if he wished to take refuge from the noises that distracted him. Into the underbrush we plunged again, were posted here, and fired; were sent there, and fired again; were hurried at the double to the flank, where I, coming behind the rest, was

held by the captain and posted with a rear-guard, to fire upon the enemy if he appeared across a little clearing. It was evident that the enemy's intentions could not be guessed in advance. I heard very rapid firing at my back, and a burst of cheering. Then the bugle blew, and the whistles sounded everywhere through the wood. Of the enemy I had had few glimpses, and in general I realized that the confusion had been extreme.

As I plodded through underbrush to rejoin my company, I came across some white-banded fellows who, with fixed bayonets and heavy breathing, had evidently just been charging. Meeting presently a member of our company, I asked him what had taken place in this part of the encounter. "Oh, those fellows? You never saw anything so foolish. They wandered out from the woods and fixed bayonets in the open, and we fired at them for five minutes, at a hundred and fifty yards, before they began their charge. Of course they stopped at fifty yards from us, the rule, you know. Then our lieutenant asked theirs what his men wore to make them bullet-proof, and we hoped there would be some back talk, for the other fellow was mad. Pendleton's tongue does cut. But an umpire came and ruled them out, and we're sure of them, anyway."

Well, fighting in the woods is "impossible," as the major explained to us later at conference. Apparently if it must be, it must, but there can

be very little science in it. At the conference our officers explained what had happened at different parts of our line, and we were all sure that we had won. But I noticed that the two battalions held their conferences separately, and concluded that the same consoling deduction was being made at the other discussion. Yet one idea must have fixed itself in the mind of every thinking man there: we were too green, and some of our platoon-leaders were too green, for effective work under such circumstances. Once or twice on our skirmishes we have known that we did well, and after the wet fight toward Cherubusco our captain ventured the statement that he could make us soldiers in six months; but today I think he would have doubled the period, for it was plain that a veteran enemy determined to push his lines forward would have made short work of us in our confusion.

One thing I learned which I shall remember to my private advantage. The next time I find myself firing from behind a snake fence I shall not crowd forward into one of the corners. For that brings one's ears even with the muzzles of the rifles to the right and left, and the result is deafening.

We had delighted the foot-loose population of Dannemora, and perhaps had tantalized the poor fellows behind the bars; certainly we gave profitable employment to a score of professional buzzards, who turned up with their bags to search

the woods where we had been firing. As for ourselves, we were soon on the road again and hiking in the dust, through country which was still too deserted and unkempt, with its brush pastures and scattered log houses, for the taste of a New Englander. At dips and turns of the road we saw the drab column winding before us; we passed through straggling Cadyville and came at last to the unwelcome macadam. Our feet, used to the gravel roads, found this unyielding surface tire us more in a mile than the other could do in five. I admit that I was thoroughly glad when at last we saw the camping ground, turned aside into the green grass, and pitched our tents. Some strap of the pack having slipped, the weight had irked me more in the last hour than it had done in all the nine days of the hike, and it was with great relief that I swung it from my shoulders.

Another proof of the mathematical formula that Food Indulgence equals Indigestion. A gormandizer from a neighboring squad has lately been very savage on account of dyspepsia. Yesterday he crawled out of bed with the sourest expression and would scarcely respond to greetings, spoke of his stomach, and intimated that he would ask to ride with the baggage. Yet he marched with us, preserving so gloomy a silence that Corder, experimenting, hailed him four times before he would answer. Then he vouchsafed, "Every step I take my stomach hurts me," and

so he stalked on, alone amid the jollity of the marching column. We had reached camp, and were pitching tents, when I heard his bunkie demanding his whereabouts. He had disappeared, leaving his mate to do his work. But before long I heard his voice, entirely bright and happy, say "Sixty cents!" and there he stood in the midst of his squad, triumphantly holding up a big mince pie.

Today the poor man was down again, wrapped in gloom. Again he threatened to ask to ride, but again he managed to subdue his pains. Said I, "I suppose that pie is paying you back." He answered, "You don't understand. I have to buy those things because they give us so little sweet in our diet." One has to respect misery, however caused, and I bothered him no more.

But David has managed to subdue Pickle, who goes no longer to the buzzards' counters, and though he complains that the struggle is hard, he admits that the results pay. No more pains for him. So yesterday, though at the sight of the crisp pie Pickle's eye wandered toward the pastry booth outside the gate, when he caught David's warning glance he controlled himself and went on with his work.

It was here at Cadyville that, for the first time since leaving Plattsburg, we were able to have a real swim, or rather (since the water was like ice) we found depth enough and room enough for all. Over a meadow and down a bluff a path

led from camp to a big paper mill which stood above a gorge of the Saranac River. The huge pile of pulp, at which men were picking and prying with pickaxe and canthook, ought to be a gold mine in these days of high prices of paper. Beyond was the dam, higher than a house on its clear side and (so we were told) of equal depth on the other. Along the sides of the big basin there was room for the wholé regiment; and the dive from the dam—how the men yelled when their heads came out, and how they swam to get ashore again!

Our last afternoon in camp! We felt that we had earned repose after a day's hard work—a month's hard work! No more skirmishing among rocks, stumps, and barbed wire; no more firing of the gun, and no more cleaning of it. As we wished to hand the guns back in good condition, and as most of our patches and oil had given out, many of us took the friendly offers of the regulars (cavalrymen, bandsmen, cooks) who did the best business, working in pairs, that they had yet done. Even David relaxed the severity of his self-discipline, and handed out his gun and his quarter-dollar. We lolled, we talked thoughtfully, we already regretted. Men exchanged addresses, and made appointments for the distant future. I noticed that the squad kept pretty close together, as if knowing that soon it must separate for good. And now, rather seriously, the men are getting ready for the last Retreat.

(*Evening.*)

We have had our final conference, in a little amphitheatre at one side of the camp. As the dusk fell the General talked to us for the last time. He took up the subject of preparedness where he left it yesterday—what are we to do to face an emergency, all our present methods failing, the emergency, if it comes, sure to be so frightful? The old volunteer system has broken down in each of our wars—the Revolutionary, the war of 1812, the Mexican, the Civil. We have seen it, before our eyes, break down in England now. The volunteer system is unfair—why should one man fight for another equally fit? It is therefore undemocratic. There is only one thing left, universal training for all young men, and conscription in war of all of military age.

Two years ago I should have recoiled from this; a year ago I should have shaken my head doubtfully. Today I see with relief that there is this system to save us at need. It will save us whether there is war or, as we all hope, peace. You know how I have worried over our national future with this immense immigration, which yearly is less assimilated. The one thing which will teach the young immigrant American ideals and loyalty to his new flag, is service with all other young men for the same great purpose. How can they stand nightly at Retreat before the flag, hear the "Star Spangled Banner" played, salute the last sight of the colors—how can they do this for but a single

month and not feel pledged forever to defend the old flag? I tell you, mother, when I realized tonight that this was our last Retreat something gripped my throat and brought the water to my eyes. Nor was I the only one, to judge from what I saw about me.

So when the General asked us, as I suppose he has asked previous regiments, to vote in favor of universal training, every man of us shouted Ay!

I have asked some of the squad if they mean to come again next year, in case the universal training movement does not put the training camps out of business. The answer is Yes, if they can get away again. Knudsen means to be in the cavalry; he would have gone with them this year if the regulations had not required first a period with the infantry. David I have not asked yet; but Corder will come back in spite of his years. "But I must go with the quartermaster's department," he said; and when I asked why: "It's plain enough that if I can't keep up in a charge I ought to go where I can be of real use. Now nothing is more important than the Q. M. department, and trained men are needed there as well as anywhere else. So that's my job in the next camp." It's plain he'd rather march in the ranks, but he will change rather than leave the preparedness movement to get along without him.

During the afternoon there had been piled truckload after truckload of cordwood at the end of the company streets. As the conference broke

up someone lighted the heap, and soon the flames, before the wind, were leaping forty feet in the air. I took your latest letter from my pocket and could clearly read it, though at a hundred and fifty yards' distance. With shouts the crowd hastened to the fire, and company after company, each in a long line of men cheering for their officers, took its turn in a snake-dance around the blaze. As the bonfire dwindled to an immense heap of glowing coals, a deep semicircle gathered, sitting above it on the hill, sang the songs of the hike, and called for solos from favorite singers. Chums walked up and down near the fire, or in the further darkness lay in front of tents and talked plans. Little groups gathered here or there, then restlessly broke up and shifted as men sought acquaintances for a last word that might be impossible tomorrow. In this shifting kaleidoscope of men I was glad to find Hale, cured of his bronchitis, and with a tale of how at the hospital they locked up the men's clothes, as the only way of preventing them from escaping too soon and rejoining the hike. The camp has been one last buzz of personal talks, excited, pensive, or regretful.

But all is quieting now, and I am sleepy. Love, much love, from

DICK.

From Private Samuel Pickle to His Brother

[Without date, but evidently of the same evening.]

Dear Old Man:—

You'll see me soon, perhaps sooner than you want. But there's no help for it; I shall be turned out of here. Otherwise I should stay a month longer. Never had such a good time in my life. Oh, yes, I remember I've grumbled some; and I've lost six pounds and worn out two pairs of shoes. Never put your shoes near the fire or on a stove. But for hardening of the muscles and toughening of the hide, give me Plattsburg. If you have any complaints to make to me at any time, think well of them beforehand.

Our David that I've told you about, he turns out to be a true sport after all. Marches with the best of us, lives as dirty as we, enjoys it all. The young cuss, I've grown fond of him. What do you think his latest is? He's kept hammering at me till he's made me stop buying pies and things! Good for the pocket-book, but particularly good for my little insides. The last three days I haven't even had a hankering for something sweet. Tell Nelly she needn't bother to make chocolate layer cake when I come home, like I asked her to.

I swear I feel sorry to leave the squad. I've scarcely enjoyed this last night at all, and though

I've made as much noise as anybody, it was so as not to show how bad I feel inside. I hate the idea of not seeing the captain again, and the Professor who bunks with me, and especially David who marches side of me. So I've come away from all the cheering and singing to write to you. David has asked me to write to him. And he meant it, too.

I'm not gloomy at coming home, you know. Really I'm crazy to see you all again. But if once in a while you see me sitting kind of lonesome, you'll know why.

SAM.

Private Godwin's Last Letter

Plattsburg, Oct. 5, 1916.
Sitting alone, the last one in the old empty tent.

Dear Mother:—

It will be hard for me to hold myself to the systematic narrative of this last day, I do so wish to leap to the end and to tell you great news. But I will be firm.

I was up early this morning, as I so often am. There is always the distant cavalry bugle to rouse one; it blows first. Seeing the embers of our great fire still glowing in the dusk, I went there to warm myself, and stood there listening to the sounds from the still sleepy camp. Drowsy voices, a footfall here and there, the crackle of fire and the tinkle of pots at the cook tents. Even when reveille had blown there was still for several moments this sleep-drugged quiet, in the first light of dawn.

Then there blared out the music of the full brass band in the opening crash of "Hail, hail, the gang's on deck!"

Silence no more. Yell upon yell, shout upon shout, cheer upon cheer—and for a space the brass could not be heard. The noise subsided to singing and to laughter, the music again held sway, and the camp, springing to its work in high spirits, was beginning on its last day. The last

packing, the last mess together; then as the companies stood in line for the last march out, the band marched in and out of the company streets, playing to us for the last time, preceded by a score of howling dervishes, and followed by as many others, little Cupid (my second glimpse of him) struggling along in the rear. Then we were beginning our march, cheerful though on macadam, and though we had learned that once more we must skirmish, and so spoil the new spotlessness of our rifles. It was a lovely morning, hazy, but through the mist showing to the right a mountain with its lower sides glowing red. Not many miles to go, and we were glad as we covered each one; but at last we heard behind us the rifles of the cavalry, and turned to fight with them a rear-guard engagement.

There was an hour of it, first and last. It had its individual features, notably the tale of a squad which, after marching for some minutes under the point blank fire of our whole platoon, tried to outflank and attack us—but an umpire attended to them. Yet after all there must be sameness to my descriptions, and I will press on to the important matters.

We were deployed between two highways, one the main road from Cadyville, one running south of it. On account of our coming, various motorists had set out to meet us, and on the northern road were a number of cars, full of fluttering females. On the southern road stood but one.

Now we were supposed to be retiring before a superior force; but their disposition offering an excellent chance to give them a jolt, our company was sent through the southern fields against their flank. There was much standing stubble and high weeds in the field through which we stole silently by rushes, Kirby behind us and urging us on, using only short blasts of his whistle as signals, and the vibrant tones of his penetrating voice. We were less than a hundred yards from the enemy and he had not discovered us; every man of us kept low to the ground, and never before had the company worked so like a machine. Our squad was on the outer flank, coming along the broken roadside wall, when I heard someone say from the lone car that we were approaching. "Aren't they doing it magnificently?"

I knew the voice. It was the old colonel, standing up in the car to watch us. With him were Vera, Frances, and their hosts the Chapmans.

The captain came close up and spoke to us. "Corporal, has your flank guard seen any outposts?"

Bann called across the road to Knudsen. "What have you seen?" He answered "Nothing."

Said the captain, "After the next rush I shall send your whole squad across. Forward now to the line of that row of apple trees ahead." And at Bann's "Follow me!" we slipped ahead not

merely to the line of three old trees, but also to the position of the waiting motor, which was just abreast of us. While the rest of the company slipped forward to our line, I took a satisfying look at the girls. Frances saw me, and we smiled. Vera was absolutely intent on something behind me, of course the captain. And still not a shot from the flank-guard in front, I think a sleepy platoon under a sergeant. We chuckled. But then a gun went off in our line somewhere on the right. We swore. Ahead of us the enemy broke into a crackle of gunfire, not very heavy.

In it, so few were the guns that were firing, I clearly distinguished, among the short dull explosions of the blanks we know so well, a sharp and angry crack, followed by a tearing snap right over my head.

Surprised, I yet recognized the noise of the passage of a bullet. A second time!—and then, familiar as I am with the legend of the clip of ball cartridges, I instantly knew it to be true. And again—Crack-snap! I heard the old colonel crying to the ladies, "Down!"

Then a long blast of the captain's whistle. I knew he was on his feet behind me, then heard his voice through the sputter of fire that was beginning from our own line. "Cease firing!" Over my shoulder I looked at him, a fine manly figure in the attitude of command, one hand stretched threateningly toward the line in front.

Then, as the roar of our guns burst out on the

right, his hat flew backward, I saw blood start out on his temple, and as if an axe had struck him, he was down!

Quickly as I was on my feet, someone was quicker. A flash of white went past me, and there was Vera on her knees, gathering into her lap the head of the fallen man. I heard her little moaning cry.

In the few moments that followed I stood stupidly helpless. Our fire stopped suddenly, as the sergeants enforced the captain's command. The fire stopped in front. In the little circle of the branches of the old tree we were quiet as—yes, as the grave. Vera, holding the captain's head fiercely close, looked wildly round for help. It was Frances who slipped by me and with her handkerchief wiped away the blood that stood upon the temple.

Oh, the relief! A long red bruise showed where the bullet had passed.

And then he opened his eyes. Vera, looking down on him, said quite simply, "Are you all right, Allan?"

Was he all right? Was he in heaven? At the look on his face I turned away with sudden tears in my eyes. The rest, I know, also avoided that solemn privacy. As it came about, mother, I turned toward Frances, and she, quite overcome, to me. In such a moment of emotion, things happen. As she rested on my breast, we found that she belonged there.

It was the trampling of the major's horse that brought us to ourselves. The captain, though pale and unsteady, was on his feet. Bannister had drawn the squad quietly out of the shade of the tree. They were looking at the landscape; as for the major, he was most inscrutable, which happens, you know, when there is something to scrutinize. Said he very innocently: "The lieutenant will take the company in, Captain Kirby. I think we'd better ask your friends here to bring you to the surgeon.—Call your men together, Mr. Pendleton!"

The lieutenant, pale as the captain, yet looking very resolute, stepped up to him and wrenched his hand, bowed over Vera's, turned about and blew his whistle. With his hand he signalled the assembly. And good Bannister, very apologetic at interrupting my love-making, said diffidently "Hem! Squad Eight, fall in!"

But I kissed Frances before them all, and helped the captain into the tonneau, where they established him very comfortably between the two girls. It was not till I had got a smile from him and a proud look from Vera that I went to my place in the company. As I went I saw out of the corner of my eye the major and his staff holding an inquest on the platoon that had fired on us. I wondered who had had that clip of ball cartridges.

But they never found out. We rested for a while at the crossroads, and I can tell you I had to stand some banter from the squad after the

motor had shot by us, with Frances's handkerchief fluttering to me. There was very excited speculation as to the penalty for shooting the captain; some were for a military execution when we got to camp, with burial on the drill field. But the major came and told the lieutenant, and he passed the word to the company—the men who fired on us had used up all their cartridges and moved from the ground before they had been accused of the use of ball; no one knew, apparently not even themselves, who had fired the dangerous shots. It might happen, you know, that a stupid or excited man might load with ball and not be aware of it. As for me, I'm not finding any fault, nor are certain others that I could name.

The march in to camp? To tell the truth, I don't remember much of it, for I was thinking a good deal. One poor chap we passed as he waited for the hospital truck to come along and pick him up, a disappointed man of fifty, who held his head down and would not look at us as we tramped by in sympathetic silence. As we entered the residence quarter of Plattsburg, where people lined the streets, the whistles blew Halt and we were waved to the two sides of the street: "Fall out to the right and left." We dropped down on the grass all around a rock where two pretty girls had ensconced themselves to see us pass; instead, we saw them run! Then on we went through the town, marching at attention,

with everybody out on the streets to watch the last of the rookies of 1916.

But when we reached the post there was evidently to be a March Past, for the band was playing ahead of us, stationed opposite the general and his staff. We braced ourselves up, swung into line—and there was the captain in front of us! Very pale he was, with a bit of white bandage showing under the hat that had the hole in it. But he was firm on his feet. What a yell for a moment we let out! Then like veterans we followed him with his old familiar stride, and if there was a break in all our line—no, I can't believe it. We saluted the general, the lieutenant broke us into column of squads, and then we gave Eyes Right to the captain, who stood at salute as we marched by.

The break-up was a heart-rending affair. So much had we been delayed by the unexpected skirmish and the little investigation that there was only the smallest amount of time to turn in our equipment, get our baggage, and catch the trains that would not wait. So in the scrabble were no real good-bys, no friendly little chats about the past and future, no appointments for reunions. I did not even shake hands with Bannister as he hurried to the boat that for some reason was his means of getting away. There were just two little events that I can describe to you.

As we marched into camp David was uneasy,

and acknowledged frankly that he was afraid his mother would be there to take him home in the motor. But the familiar strawberry limousine was nowhere to be seen, and as we swung into the company street we saw not David's mother, but his father in his ancient Panama and his wrinkled business suit. The boy shouted his delight, and when we broke ranks he dragged his father to the tent and introduced him to as many of us as he could pin down for a moment. And a little later, catching both Knudsen and me, he kept us in the tent while he reminded his father of a promise. "You know, father, you said you'd give me any kind of an automobile I wanted, if I stayed through the hike."

Mr. Farnham had been deeply pleased, you could see it in his face, that David had grown so manly. Consequently he was the more disappointed at this prompt practical demand. But though a shade crossed his face, he answered kindly, "You've earned it, David."

David put a hand on my arm, and on his other side drew Knudsen a little closer to him, as if for support. "Then, father, I want a Ford!"

"A Ford?" cried his father. A Ford! thought I—a four hundred dollar car when he might spend his thousands?

"Yes," said David, a little unsteadily. "I want to learn to take one apart and put it together, and then I want you to send another Ford ambulance to France, with me to drive it."

A glorious smile broke over the father's face, of pride, and fondness, yet also of possible sacrifice of this son who was now first showing his manhood—for there is danger in that ambulance service. I saw the story was true that Mr. Farnham has been sending ambulances abroad; and saw also that David had been afraid of his father's opposition to a scheme which he had been hatching in secret. So he had felt the need of my support and Knudsen's. But the father held out both hands to his boy, and Knudsen and I slipped quietly out of the tent and walked together, without saying a word, down to the edge of the drill-field.

Said Knudsen then: "Since it's settled now, that silly mother can't interfere."

I was feeling pleased that though at first I had studiously neglected David, he had needed me now. Knudsen's mind travelled much the same road.

"A good investment," he said, "the trouble we've put into that youngster."

I had a little talk with Mr. Farnham before the train went. He was overflowing with happiness. David had somehow got the idea of service, and unknown to us had been planning his life by it. First to help in this emergency in France, then to find some way in which a rich man could give his time to his country, in some branch of public service. It was fixed in his mind that next summer he must be at Plattsburg again, working for

a commission in the reserve. Beyond that he would need his father's advice and help.

"So there's something more in life for me now," said the father, "than the mere making of money."

It was in the midst of all the hurry and confusion of our getting ready to go that I heard a great shouting at the head of the street, and going to see, found the captain there, and Vera watching from a little distance. He had come to take personal leave of those he knew best, shook hands with every one, called scores of us by name, thanked us all for our help in his work, showed in his face his great new happiness. When those who pressed upon him first had gone away, driven by the necessity that was on all of them, he called me to him and made me promise not to leave with the rest, but at least to stay overnight —for we were to be brothers now, he said, and must know each other better before we separated. While a new group came and talked with him I went to Vera.

"Frances is waiting in the car outside," she said, scarcely glancing at me, but with eager eyes watching the captain and the men who still pressed upon him.

"Is he popular now?" I asked. "Do the men love him? Don't you approve of him a little bit yourself?"

This roused her into giving me all her attention for a moment. "Oh, Dick," she cried, remem-

bering, "if it hadn't been for what you said to him, perhaps—!" She couldn't quite express the tragedy that would have followed.

"Perhaps it would have taken a little longer, that is all," I said. "There, watch him, do." For in spite of herself her eyes would stray back to him. "Frances will be nice to me." And Frances was, until I told her I must go back to the boys.

There was a minute or two here and there that I could get from the busy men. But mostly I helped them get away, cleaned their guns, handed in their stuff, helped them pack, lugged their baggage with them to the train. Knudsen and I and Clay had one last short walk together, up and down the embankment beside the train, soberly vowing friendship for the future. Then the conductor gave the signal, they climbed aboard, there was a short half-minute of waving of good-bys, and I walked back alone across the empty drill field.

I am sitting now upon my bag in the tent which has so often rung with our laughter or buzzed with our talk. Here are the ridges and hollows made by our feet, over in the corner are Clay's old shoes, and near me lie three empty shells that David threw out of his pocket. Our equipment is all turned in, the buzzards in our absence carried everything else away, and this lonely silence is more than I can bear. In a few minutes I shall close this last letter to you; then Frances will

come in the car to take me to a telegraph office, where I shall wire you that she and I are starting home tomorrow with the Chapmans, and shall not be home for three days more. As I shall hint at the reason, you will understand and will forgive me this delay. I know, dear mother, that your heart always was with Frances, after all.

And so good-by to Plattsburg!

DICK.

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